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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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SUBJECT Vladimir Posner Interviewed

L J LARRY KING: Our first guest tonight is Vladimir Posner. He's become kind of a cult figure in America, easily the best-known Soviet radio and television commentator, who lived for how long in this country?

VLADIMIR POSNER: Eight years.

KING: Why'd you leave?

POSNER: Why did I leave? My parents left. I was 14 going on 15. My father went back to the Soviet Union. I wanted to go with him.

KING: Good thinking at 14.

POSNER: Yeah.

KING: Your father worked for MGM, didn't he?

POSNER: He worked for a subdivision of MGM called Lowes International.

KING: Why did he leave?

POSNER: Well, he had very strong political views. He was a Soviet citizen and he absolutely wanted his children to grow up in the Soviet Union. He wanted to go there. So he left.

KING: What was it like? It's enough of a trauma at 14 to move from Florida to Chicago. What was it like to move to another country at 14?

POSNER: Not only another country, another culture, another language that I did not speak. As a matter of fact, I wound up in the Soviet Union when I was 19 because we first stayed in Germany. My father was working there.

It was a very exciting, difficult experience because everything was different. Everything was different. Everything that I'd been used to was not the same. I had a great desire to be there. I was very pro-Soviet in my political outlook, but I had no experience at all in the country. So I had to learn the language and adapt to a new culture.

KING: The adjustment was extraordinary.

POSNER: Yeah.

KING: What did it for you? That is, the hurdles that you overcame, what did it?

POSNER: I think it's a combination of many things: the desire that I had, the environment that I was in. I went to Moscow U. There were wonderful people there. In the summer we went out to the virgin lands. We went to the forests in Siberia. The taiga, it's called. We trekked. We did songs and dance and skits for local workers. I really became part of it, and that did it.

KING: By the way, I neglected to say this at the beginning. Since we're in Los Angeles, we have a different phone number all this week....

You were a biology major.

POSNER: I majored in human physiology. Yes.

KING: What took you to journalism?

POSNER: Total coincidence, accident. I didn't want to be a biologist, I figured by the time I'd finished. I want to be a translator of poetry. I loved, and still love, English 17th Century poetry. I began doing that. I worked with a very famous Soviet translator, Samuel Marschak, for about two years. And then I discovered that I really didn't want to do that as a profession.

And at that time, I got a call from a friend who said that there was a new wire service organization being founded in Moscow called Novosti Press Agency. They were looking for people who knew languages, and would I like to try out for an interview? I said yes.

I tried out. I was offered the job of senior editor,

and I took it.

KING: Pretty good opening shot.

POSNER: Very. Very.

KING: You do both newspaper and...

POSNER: Not anymore. I used to be totally press. And about -- I guess it was 1967 or '68, I began to free-lance for radio; totally moved into radio in 1970, and then radio and television beginning in 1975-76.

KING: Everybody likes to jump all over you, so I'm going to approach this from a different kind of standpoint.

First, is it better financially to be a broadcast journalist than a print journalist in the Soviet Union?

POSNER: Not necessarily. It all depends on how active you are. If you write a lot for a newspaper, you will live and get just as much and live just as well as if you appear often on television. Basically, it's the same thing.

KING: A little different, then, from this country.

POSNER: Yes. But, of course, if you're on television you're much better known to the population than if you write for a newspaper.

KING: And does the population have, like we have our kind of -- we have our Brinkleys and our Jennings and our Brokaws and Rathers. Same thing there?

POSNER: Not quite. We don't have anchor people. But people who appear often on television, who host shows, are very well known in the country. So they do have a kind of a star status.

KING: Are you well known?

POSNER: I've become pretty well known.

KING: Why do you -- why do we know you the best?

POSNER: Well, I think there are two reasons. I was one of the first to appear on American television, in '79 on Nightline. And because of my language and my ability to communicate with Americans, I've been on more than most of my fellow citizens. So I think that's the reason.

KING: One of the things that -- every journalist that I

have ever known is a complainer. I mean it's by nature. They don't like things. In fact, they tend to be rebellious, no matter where they are: this terrible item, don't like the travel accommodations, [unintelligible].

What don't you like...

POSNER: In general?

KING: ...about the Soviet Union? In other words, I could tell you things I don't like about America.

POSNER: Yeah.

KING: You know, I think the planes lie to you. People at airports lie to you. You get there a 2:30, the plane ain't there, they say it's going to leave on time.

What don't you like?

POSNER: I don't like the bureaucracy, which I think is a disaster. I don't like the way the economy is functioning. It's not good at all. There are a whole lot of things I don't like.

I mean we say that we have a great system of education, which in principle is true. But there's a whole lot of things about it that are not so great.

KING: Like?

POSNER: Well, the fact that the schools -- because we have no tuition, for a long time teachers were among the least well paid. So the profession was not attractive. People who went into teaching were people who really didn't want to teach but had nowhere else to go. You see what that means in the sense of education. That is changing, but that was the case.

I feel that there's not enough emphasis nowadays on literature and on humanitarian subjects, and too much emphasis on mathematics, physics and chemistry, which does not develop your, really, thinking power in the philosophical sense of the word.

There are a lot of things that I would criticize.

KING: The bureaucracy is very difficult?

POSNER: The bureaucracy -- I think it's terrible everywhere, and certainly ours is. Marx once upon a time said that the one stratum of society that is never patriotic and always hinders everything is the bureaucracy. He could have

said, "Bureaucrats of the world unite," and he would have been right.

KING: What do you like about your former country?

POSNER: The United States?

KING: Mmmm.

POSNER: Oh, that's a lot of different things, big and little. I like the spirit of the people, an openness. I like a certain amount of individualism that there is in Americans. I like the pioneer spirit that's still around. I like the humor, which is great. I like the warmth. I like -- it's a beautiful country, what's more. Physically, it's a beautiful country.

And then there are little things, like baseball and peanut butter, that I like.

KING: Yeah. Don't you miss that? Come on, Vladimir.

POSNER: Of course I do.

KING: Come back, Vladimir.

POSNER: [Laughter] I'm here. I'm here. And I hope to come back again.

KING: Do you always like coming here?

POSNER: Well, you know, this is the first time in 38 years that I've been back.

KING: You're kidding.

POSNER: No. The first time in 38 years.

KING: Okay. What's it like? What's changed the most?

POSNER: Oh. It's a moving thing to come back to your childhood. And when I was in New York City, it was incredible. After 15 minutes it was as if I'd never left.

And then, gradually, I saw the things that had changed. Midtown is a different city. The affluence is much more apparent, and so is the misery, and that's more apparent.

There are little things, like there are less dogs and more bicycles. More obese people and more people running. The avenues to be two-ways, now they're one-way.

KING: Yeah.

POSNER: A whole lots of different things.

KING: How about -- now you've traveled. Do you like Los Angeles?

POSNER: You're putting me on the spot. I have always though -- oh boy.

KING: Of all the cities...

POSNER: I'm not going to be pop -- yes. I'm sorry.

KING: To big?

POSNER: I don't get a feel for a city. It's like something spread out. And I don't feel the character. I felt it in Boston. I felt it in Chicago. I felt it in Seattle, let alone New York. I can't figure out what Los Angeles is.

KING: Okay. Now, as a journalist -- we talked about self-criticism, which always journalists do. Why -- it seems logical -- why can't, in the Soviet, why can't you get up on a street corner in the Soviet Union and say, "I don't like Gorbachev. I think he should change the train schedule. And I'm going to hang a sign up here for as long as it takes for Gorbachev to see this"?

POSNER: Right.

KING: Why can't you do that?

POSNER: It's not a question of can or can't. I think it's a completely different cultural tradition.

In America, you tend to fasten on one man, on one thing. And so you say Reagan, or whoever. In my country, you tend to look at the whole government. And you criticize it. You can do it, and people do. I mean they write tons of letters about the way they don't like, say, how the transportation system is functioning. But they don't hang it on one person. It's a different way of doing things.

But what I think is very important and what I'm trying to do is say: There's a difference. Let's understand our differences. But let's accept them as legitimate. Let's not say, "Be like us," because that's hopeless. We're not going to be like each other. We are different culturally and historically.

KING: Do you think we can be friends?

POSNER: Oh, absolutely. I have no problem with that.

KING: What do you base that on?

POSNER: I base that on the fact that if you have become friends with the Chinese, and you have a lot of differences with them, it's much easier to become friends with us because we have more in common. After all, we are of European origin.

KING: Would you admit, then, that there's been bad moves on both sides?

POSNER: Yes.

KING: Since the Cold War.

POSNER: Oh, yeah. Nobody's totally right. If I were asked to balance it, I would say I think there's been less effort on this side to be friends, on the governmental level, with the Soviet Union. But that there have been bad moves on both sides, absolutely.

KING: Do you feel free?

POSNER: Absolutely free. Absolutely free.

KING: Absolutely.

POSNER: But I think, again, we have to realize that there's a difference even in the concept of what is freedom. In your country freedom is more or less to do, to say, to act what you want. In my country freedom is responsibility, first and foremost.

KING: All right. As someone born here...

POSNER: No, no. I was born in Paris.

KING: Born in Paris. But you were here, when, 7 through 14?

POSNER: That's right.

KING: That's a formative age.

Aren't there times you wish you could do what American journalists do?

POSNER: Which is what?

KING: Go on television and knock the government?

POSNER: You know, I'm not sure that just going -- it's satisfying...

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KING: Don't you wish you could do it?

POSNER: I don't really want to do that. It's self-satisfying, but I'm not sure that it does anything. I want to do things that indeed lead to some kind of concrete activity. And I'm not sure that just getting up and knocking, pleasurable as it may be, leads to anything. It's an ego trip...

KING: The power to knock.

POSNER: The power to knock. Well, you could get used to that.

KING: [Laughter]

Our guest is Vladimir Posner....

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KING: We're going to intersperse your phone calls with our questions for Victor Posner, the...

POSNER: Vladimir Posner.

KING: Vladimir. Why did I Victor? See, I'm bringing you back here, getting you back.

What was your name here?

POSNER: Vlad. Bill, some people called me.

KING: Come on, Vlad. Vlad? You were Vlad? Where, in Brooklyn?

POSNER: In Manhattan.

KING: Vlad?

POSNER: Yeah.

KING: Okay. Vladimir Posner, who still -- attention Moscow -- still likes baseball. Better than soccer. Still likes baseball.

We're ready to go to your phone calls, and we start with New York City.

WOMAN: I'd like to know how he gained the title journalist when he is an eventuality, a spokesman for the Soviet government.

KING: Fair question.

POSNER: I put it this way. I consider myself to be a journalist. I write. I go on the air in my own country.

In this country, I'm here to explain the Soviet position.

KING: Well, then you're not a journalist on this tour.

POSNER: Well, I am here because people want to know the Soviet position. And I don't think they want to know my personal views. They're more interested in hearing what the Soviet position is, which is what I try to explain.

But I'm not an official spokesman. I've not been sent as that. I do not represent the government. I have not been briefed. So I would say, still, I'm a journalist, a Soviet journalist, explaining what Soviet policy is.

KING: Could an American journalist do this through the Soviet Union?

POSNER: There have been Americans on the air in my country, including journalists. One that I interviewed personally, Serge Neiman (?) of the New York Times.

I would like to see more American journalists, and I would also like to see them explaining the American view, the American policy, and not their personal views, because that's not all that important.

KING: Supposing CNN said we wanted to send me, or ABC wanted to send Ted Koppel, or someone. How easily could we get there?

POSNER: May I interrupt you? GOSTEL (?) -- that's my organization -- did not say, "We want to send Vladimir Posner." It was rather the other way around. Phil Donahue or ABC said, "We'd like to invite Vladimir Posner."

KING: Would we be invited?

POSNER: I think there's a good chance that some people will be invited. I will certainly try to make that happen.

KING: And then we could go on television and radio.

POSNER: And I would talk for the Soviet Union.

KING: And I could tell you about America, what I would like about America.

POSNER: I would ask you and you would answer me, like

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I'm doing right now.

KING: I see. With no briefings or anything. So, would I then be a spokesperson or a journalist? At that point I'd be both, I guess, as long as I'm allowed to criticize my own...

POSNER: You'd be both. You'd be both. Yes.

KING: All right. Our next caller is from West Haven, Connecticut.

MAN: Two quick questions. If a Jew wants to move to Israel, why not let him go? And why didn't the Soviet know when their leaders, Andropov and Chernenko, were fatally ill?

KING: Okay. That seems simple enough. Why shouldn't you let anybody go?

POSNER: That's simple enough. Up to now, 300,000, approximately, Jewish citizens -- Soviet Jews have left the country.

I don't know why it is always only the Jews that we speak about. There are other people in the Soviet Union.

KING: Why can't anybody, if he wants to...

POSNER: According to the constitution, according to our laws, they can. In each case it's an individual decision, both for emigration and for immigration. It is not a fast process. I think more people will be going out of the country, gradually. But I think it's been turned into a whole political issue, and that makes it a bit more difficult.

KING: But why would a country want someone who doesn't want to be there?

POSNER: The country doesn't want someone who [doesn't] want to be in the country. But I think you have to understand -- let me try to make an analogy. If an American were to publicly say he wants to go to the Soviet Union, he would probably be allowed to go, but he'd run into a lot of flak because he would be seen by his own countrymen as being a traitor because he's going over to the commies. In a certain way, people who want to come here from the Soviet Union are seen that way by their people, and they have a tough time.

I think, in human terms, you can understand that.

Getting over to the second question. We did know that both Andropov and Chernenko were quite ill. However, we don't

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tend to play up those things on television. In general, we don't go into the personal lives, the personal things of anyone, including our leaders. It's just not part of our tradition.

KING: Even major illness?

POSNER: Well, the people knew that they were ill. This was not a secret.

KING: But it wouldn't be...

POSNER: But we didn't have daily bulletins about the man's temperature. We don't do that.

KING: Our next call is from Concord, California.

MAN: ...I was wondering, you've been very critical of the Western press over the Chernobyl. I guess it exploited figures of thousands dead and many more thousands injured. And don't you think that this was perpetuated, if not caused, by the tight-mouthed government and the press in the Soviet Union over past incidences, such as the Korean Air Lines flight and these other incidences?

POSNER: I certainly don't. I think that those particular instances that I mentioned, the 15,000 dead and the mass graves, were a typical example of what I would call irresponsible journalism. And not all American media did that. Far from all of it. I think we're looking at some specific cases.

I don't believe -- insofar as the KAL incident is concerned, it remains to be seen who ultimately was tight-mouthed. And I don't think the story has yet been fully told.

I just think that there are certain media in the United States, or medium, that have done irresponsible things.

KING: But isn't that part of the nice thing about this country? That, with that First Amendment, we can even have irresponsibility?

POSNER: I don't like that at all. It's almost like...

KING: You would like a conformity so that you couldn't be a New York Post and a New York Times. Everything would have to be...

POSNER: No. I would like to see responsibility as being the principle.

KING: We'd all like that. But we wouldn't arrest someone for being irresponsible.

POSNER: I'm not saying you should arrest him. But I think when you're talking about a journalist, journalists affect the way people think. They are, whether they like it or not, playing with people's minds. And if a doctor can be drummed out of his profession for malpractice, I think a journalist should also be drummed out if he is distorting facts.

And that 15,000 in mass graves was a typical example of that type of irresponsible journalism.

KING: Does the journalist in the Soviet Union, albeit the cultural differences, does he want that scoop?

POSNER: Yes.

KING: The same as the American. Does he want that inside story, even if it hurts a government department?

POSNER: He wants the inside story.

KING: Scandal in the Department of Agriculture.

POSNER: He wants it. It must be accurate. He must have the proof. If he comes out with a headline that is not true, that does not correspond to the facts, he will probably lose his job.

KING: If he has the proof, can Pravda break a story that hurts the government?

POSNER: Well now, what do you mean, hurts the government?

KING: Okay. Pravda finds, through wonderful investigative journalism, that there's a scandal in the Soviet Department of Agriculture. And in this scandal, six or seven people have been hoarding food or shipping food to friends, etcetera, breaking a law. Dead proof.

POSNER: Right.

KING: Would they first have to go to the authorities, or can it be in Pravda tomorrow first?

POSNER: Pravda is in itself an authority, and they would break that story. And they've done similar stories.

What you have to understand is that in the Soviet Union there is no private corporation. So when you do break a story about something, it's either the government, in one form or another, that is the culprit; it could be the Communist Party;

some organization, local or whatever; it could be the trade union. It's always something official, one way or another.

KING: Lyndon Johnson once said that somewhere in between the two systems will be the next society. The good part about socialist concept, caring for others, we've already shown: Medicare, unemployment insurance, pensions. Those are all basically socialist. Thomas, the candidate for President in 1932, had those as planks.

POSNER: Right.

KING: Do you agree with that? Do you think that someday, barring war, a hundred years from today, you're going to take some American things and America is going to take some Soviet things, and we're going to have sort of a balance?

POSNER: I think there is a very basic difference between the two systems. And that basic difference is that in one society you do have private ownership of what we call the means of production, meaning the banks and the factories and the land. And the other you do not. And I think that basic difference will always remain. And I think that's the main thing.

KING: You'll never have private ownership.

POSNER: Of the means of production. No. And we will never have a system where you can hire someone else and use someone's labor for your own enrichment. That will not happen.

KING: We go to Austin, Texas.

MAN: Mr. Posner, you argue incessantly that Americans should not try to impose their system on the Soviets. Well, in the U.S. we know, through elections, what kind of a system our citizens favor. But how, in the absence of elections, can we possibly know what kind of a system Soviet citizens favor?

POSNER: I think you should know that there are elections in the Soviet Union in which over 99 percent of the people vote.

KING: The choice?

POSNER: Let me make a point here. I think it's important to understand that if they did not want to vote, if they did not support the candidate, they just wouldn't go to the polls. And I hope you don't think that they're herded there by the police or the army. So the fact that 99 percent of the people, on the average, do vote, I think, speaks of the support they have for their government and for their system. This may not be reported to you in full, but nevertheless that is a fact.

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KING: That's a fact.

POSNER: It's a fact.

KING: Do they campaign?

POSNER: Do the candidates speak? Absolutely. They speak before...

KING: Posters, signs, ads in newspapers?

POSNER: Posters, signs, and public, public with meetings.

KING: Come and vote for me.

POSNER: They explain what they want to do, why they're candidates.

KING: You can't, though -- there's nowhere in the Constitution of the United States that mentions the word capitalism. A socialist can be elected in the United States, and some have. Can you change the system by vote?

POSNER: In my country? In my country?

KING: Yeah. The United States could change the system by vote.

POSNER: Since we have a one-party system, it would be rather difficult to do. We once upon a time had a multiparty system, after the Revolution. The majority of the people just didn't want it, and one of the those parties tried to assassinate Lenin. That was one of the reasons why it didn't work.

But in other socialist countries -- for instance, Hungary or the German Democratic Republic -- there are multiparty systems.

KING: Hungary seems to work.

POSNER: Oh, I think it does. On the other hand, Hungary has very serious economic problems, a huge foreign debt. So we'll see how that goes.

KING: With Vladimir Posner, Santa Monica, California.
Hello.

MAN: I was listening to the caller right before me ask his question. I would say I have a response, really, to Vladimir's answer to that. And I wonder how he can justify this

notion that that's a democracy or voting, when there are only one candidate or a couple of candidates that are government-approved running, and people just go and vote as a formality. There's no contest.

KING: Is it a democracy?

POSNER: It is a different kind of democracy, and that's very basic. However, it is not a formality. Because when people actively go vote, they're expressing something. It is not a formality for them. One of the ways of not -- you can refuse to vote. You can cross out the name on the ballot and write in someone else's if you wish.

KING: If people travel to the Soviet Union, are their hotel rooms bugged?

POSNER: [Laughter] You know what?

KING: Everyone says that.

POSNER: Well, I know. But it would be -- just imagine. We have about four million tourists a year. Imagine how many people would have to be listening to all of this.

I think that anywhere in the world, if your secret service has a reason to be suspicious of a certain person, they will follow that person and possibly bug his hotel room. But by and large, I'd totally say that that's crazy.

KING: If you're paranoid, though, you'd bug a lot of people.

POSNER: Well, if you're paranoid, you'd think that you're being bugged all the time.

KING: True.

POSNER: Okay.

KING: You're saying that's not...

POSNER: I'm saying that's nonsense. I'm saying if you're going to the Soviet Union with a certain purpose, with an agenda, you want to do something against that country, well, then, maybe you're right to be paranoid.

KING: In the United States we can investigate on public television our own CIA, chastise it, have members of the Senate stand up and criticize it. Could that happen with the KGB in the Soviet Union?

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POSNER: The KGB has been investigated and is subjected to investigation by the Party.

KING: In public?

POSNER: And this has been published. Not on television. Nor do we bring our cameras into our...

KING: Now, as I guy who grew up, or spent eight years in New York, isn't that a part you'd like to see? Wouldn't you like to see the officials on television being grilled about...

POSNER: I've seen officials on television being grilled. I'm talking about Ministers of the U.S.S.R. There's no doubt about it. But I'm not sure the security issues, in any country, should be part of the public debate. I'm not sure.

KING: As a journalist, really, you feel that way?

POSNER: I feel that sometimes it's exploited, it's played with. It doesn't really serve any purpose.

KING: We'll be right back with Vladimir Posner.

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KING: Our next caller is from Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

MAN: I'd like to compliment Mr. Posner on his eloquence.

But second, I'd like to ask him, what are your thoughts on the revelations made by Arkady Shevchenko in his book "Breaking with Moscow" on how Nikita Khrushchev's name is no longer even mentioned in the Soviet Union?

POSNER: Well, first of all, I'd like to say that's not true. His name is mentioned. He's in the history books.

And quite frankly, when we talk about a man like Arkady Shevchenko, who betrayed his country -- he was a high-standing official who began to work for the CIA -- I cannot accept the honesty of anyone who would do that anywhere in the world, regardless of what country he went to.

KING: Therefore, if an American defected to the Soviet Union, you wouldn't buy his book either.

POSNER: I would not. I would not. I don't like people who betray their countries. I really don't accept them, and I don't trust them.

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KING: Is anti-Semitism cultural?

POSNER: Yes. Absolutely.

KING: What can you do about it?

POSNER: Educate people. And it takes a long time. I mean even if you have all the laws in the world, it's going to take generations to overcome prejudice. It's just not -- it cannot happen by decree, by law; it has to be a long education.

KING: Is that something that made you bitter about Russia at all, about the Soviet Union?

POSNER: No. I encountered anti-Semitism in the United States. It was the first place I learned of it. I'm not bitter about those things. I realize it's one of the banes of humanity.

But I am happy that in the Soviet Union there's a tremendous effort to overcome that kind of prejudice. And it is very dangerous for anyone to be anti-Semitic, for instance, in public. You can go to jail for that.

KING: Really?

POSNER: Oh, yes.

KING: For speaking against Jews?

POSNER: For calling someone the equivalent -- excuse me -- of a kike, you can go to jail.

KING: We go to Tarzana, California.

MAN: I wonder what Mr. Posner's thoughts are on the anti-Soviet humor in American commercials, such as the Wendy's hamburgers, where the Soviet people are made to appear oafish and ignorant, and also in the movies of Sylvester Stallone, where they're presented as though they're ogres and...

KING: How do you view this?

POSNER: Well, I take the commercials as being in very bad taste and capitalizing, more or less, on the American standard image of what a Soviet is like.

I wouldn't compare them, however, with the Rambo and Rocky things, which I would say are very chauvinistic and tend to stimulate real hatred.

KING: Now you have a Soviet film coming out.

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POSNER: Which one?

KING: It's like Ramo.

POSNER: Oh, no.

KING: Oh, yeah.

POSNER: What's it calle?

KING: What's it called? I just saw an excerpt from it.

Yes.

POSNER: I doubt this very much.

KING: Yes. Yes, it's coming.

POSNER: You mean the Soviets kill Americans?

KING: The Soviets kill...

POSNER: No, out of the question.

KING: There's a Rambo guy in it.

POSNER: Well, I'll tell you what. If such a film comes out, I will publicly denounce it. I do not want to see a Soviet film where Soviets are killing Americans. I would totally be against it.

KING: There are soldiers of fortune, and this guy takes them on. There's machine guns and shooting and it's being...

POSNER: Where did you see this?

KING: It's playing in 200 theaters in the Soviet Union.

POSNER: What's it called, for God sakes?

KING: What's it called? I just saw a feature on it on American television.

POSNER: I have to see this before I -- I mean I have to see it to believe it.

KING: Vladimir, I'm telling you the truth. The is a Soviet Rambo.

POSNER: I don't believe it. I do not believe it.

KING: In fact, they even said at the end they make one mistake. They have him killed at the end.

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POSNER: Who?

KING: The Rambo, your Rambo.

POSNER: Our Rambo.

KING: Yeah. And it was a mistake because you should never kill off a Rambo, so you can make Rambo II.

POSNER: [Laughter]

KING: You have not heard of this.

POSNER: Absolutely. I would like to. But I think something's wrong there.

KING: There is a Soviet film that is Rambo-like. It's the talk of Moscow. It's playing in 200 theaters in Moscow. It's the biggest hit in the Soviet Union.

POSNER: Well, why haven't I heard about it?

KING: All right. Who's the number one star in the Soviet Union? He's got a moustache. A good-looking guy. He looks like Omar Sharif. A big film star. He's the star.

POSNER: Really?

KING: And I saw the scene where he's shot. He's shot in the back. And then all of his buddies get enraged and avenge his death.

POSNER: Well, you've got me. I really don't know about it. I want to see this film. I really want to see it. I'm going to call my wife tonight and ask her about it.

KING: And if it's as I say, you denounce it.

POSNER: I denounce it. I do not want to see films where Soviets kill Americans.

KING: One more call for Vladimir, and it's Long Island.

MAN: Vladimir, [speaks in Russia]. And the other night on Crossfire, I heard you say that the Russians have no desire for the Americans to be like them. Yet, to me, that's contrary to all that I know about Russian -- I should say contrary to what I know about the Soviet doctrine of the dialectic, where your purpose is to revolutionize the world and have everybody communized.

KING: Aren't you out to do that?

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POSNER: I'm afraid that there is no such Soviet doctrine. Dialectics is something that Marx developed and that there is a view that one day, gradually, as societies develop all around the world, they will go to socialism and on to that. There is no desire to revolutionize.

And we accept America as it is. And we would like to be accepted as we are.

KING: Okay, Vladimir. In the closing I'm going to show you a clip.

What's the name of the movie?

[Inaudible remarks]

KING: This is a clip from the biggest hit in Moscow. You've been away. It's a smasher. Moscow Variety says boffo. "The Lonely Voyage."

Watch.

[Film clip]

KING: I think this is where he gets killed, Vladimir. This may be the scene. Yep, he's going to get shot in the back. There he is. That's the star. Now these guys get really ticked.

That's the movie.

POSNER: And who are they fighting?

KING: Looks like Americans to me.

POSNER: It doesn't look like Americans to me.

KING: Who would you...

POSNER: I am ready -- this may be guerrilla warfare somewhere. I don't know. But I am willing to bet right now that those are not Americans that they're fighting.

KING: Okay. We'll check it.

Thank you very much, Vlad.

Who do you root for in baseball?

POSNER: New York Yankees. I used to be a Joe DiMaggio fan.

KING: You see, it can't leave you.