

The Elevator Operator
A Film by Jonathan Skurnik

TRANSCRIPT

“I’m Eugene Sheiman. I’m 39 years old. I was born in Ukraine. More than six years ago, I came to American to start new life, new country. Less than one year, I got my first job. Now I work as elevator operator for building in downtown Manhattan. All two years which I work here, I try to be nice to people, help them, never have arguments. I try to smile. It’s American style to smile, but it was my real smile.

I was born in Kiev. Kiev is capital of Ukraine. I like Kiev. It’s very nice town, nice city. But I try to start new life. Get better opportunity for me, for my son. I lived very close, sixty mile from Chernobyl. I saw people suffer from the tragedy. It was big nuclear tragedy. I was thinking about my son, about my family.

My son’s full name is Vladislav. He’s nine years old. He doesn’t live with me, he lives with his mother. I see him twice a week. We play on computer, we play in sport together. We love each other, we are friends.

I used to be a news reporter. I used to work for newspaper. I realize it could be hard to get same or similar job in United States. Probably I have to start new career. But I made decision. I think it was right decision.

Now I’m American citizen. In July I got my certificate. I took an oath. I proud to be American citizen.

If I go to Ukraine, I have to buy visa. I visit Ukraine as American citizen, like tourist, like guest of Ukraine.

I like to write. I write in Russian. I want to see my books published in English and other languages. So far I’ve published only small book about Russian immigrant who had to leave his county. He tried to find new life in the United States. It’s a sad story because he fell in love with black woman who had AIDS. When he realized she was dying, he was upset and he decided to leave the United States and come back to Russia. I didn’t write about myself. I never had experience which my hero had, just book, just story of person who couldn’t find himself.

For six years in the United States, sometimes I feel a little upset too. I couldn’t get job like I had before in Ukraine. Sometimes I thought maybe it better to come back, but finally I decided if I came to this country, I will stay.

Maybe I will write my next book something about my life, I call my book “My Life in Elevator.”

I have one more dream. To make my book converted to screenplay and see movie, see Hollywood movie.”