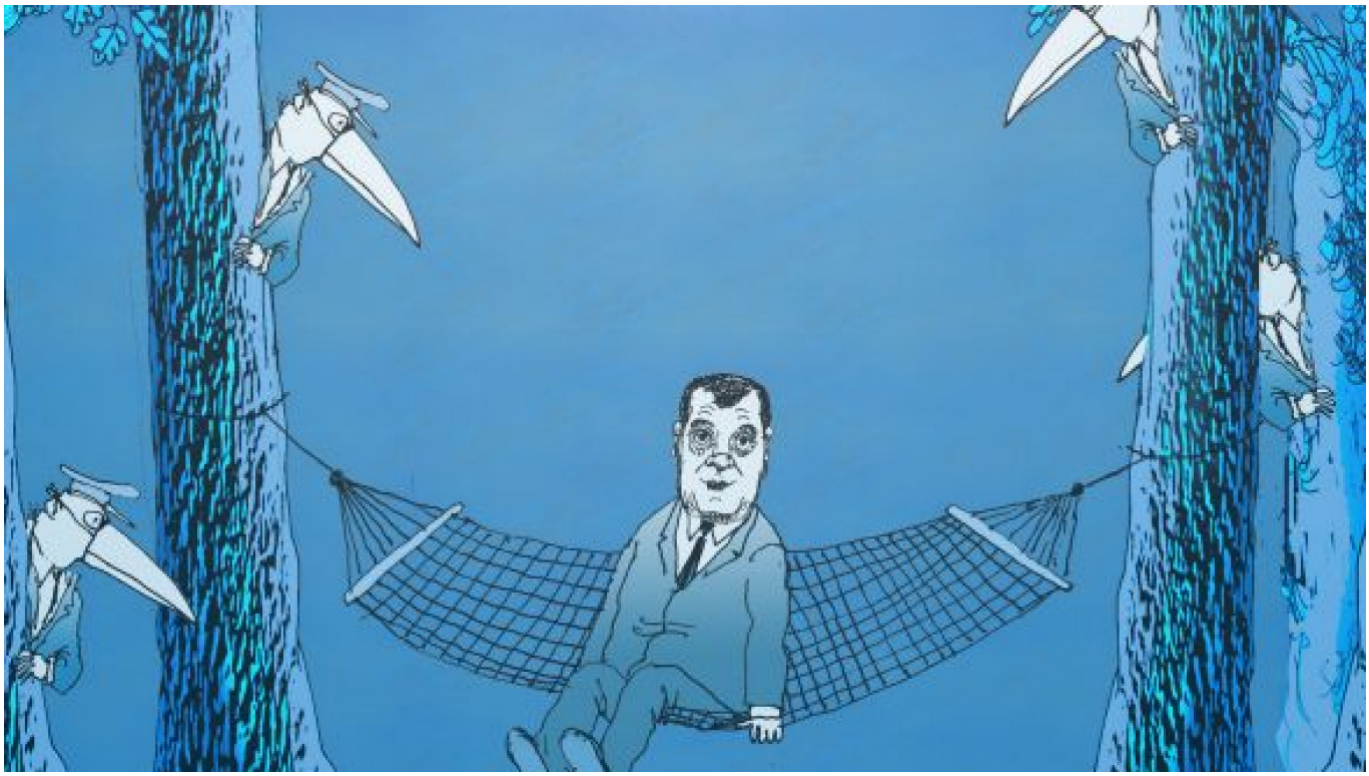
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

In The Spotlight: Dmitry's Parody

By Anna Malpas

October 28, 2010



This week, President Dmitry Medvedev revealed a self-deprecating streak of humor, writing in his Twitter account about a comedy sketch that parodied his home life with Svetlana.

"Twitter can be useful after all. I found a video that shows how I spent the summer," Medvedev wrote on Monday.

The sketch proves that "Dmitry Anatolyevich is a normal man who spends his weekends like anyone else at the dacha," the narrator says.

The joke is that Medvedev tries to do ordinary dacha tasks but is prevented by his over-anxious security staff.

When he tries to collect water in buckets from the well, a guard in a dark suit and tie runs after him, saying, "It's my instructions."

When he buys manure to spread on the vegetables, he has to ask "Volodya" Putin what a fair price is and then begs the security people, "Please stop spraying perfume on the manure."

The security guards are slightly thuggish and intimidating in dark suits and close-cropped hair. They refer to each other by numbers and pay attention to details. They sigh in disappointment when Medvedev ticks them off for repainting beetles into ladybirds.

Finally he chases off all the guards and sits down with Svetlana, believing that he is alone at last. Then a fence falls over, revealing a whole military band, complete with white gloves, who are busy imitating the sounds of woodpeckers and cuckoos.

How long have you been here? Medvedev asks in astonishment. "Since Brezhnev," they reply.

The sketch has been watched more than 270,000 times on YouTube.

Medvedev's main out-of-town residence — I hesitate to use the word "dacha" — at Gorki off Rublyovskoye Shosse is in the middle of a manicured forest dotted with lampposts, like Narnia. He also has a little place down in Sochi where he recently drank tea on the terrace with Bono, not to mention a hunting lodge in the Tver region.

The comedians in the sketch are a group from Yekaterinburg called Ural Pelmeny, which has its own show on CTC. They used to be a top team in the KVN student comedy show, although the oldest participants collected their degree certificates quite a few years ago.

Medvedev's apparently a fan of KVN, a long-running competition between student teams, which is long-winded but slips in some sharp jokes. He appeared in the audience just before being elected president.

The most famous member of Ural Pelmeny is Sergei Svetlakov, who appears on Channel One's improvised comedy show "ProjectorParisHilton" and often drops in mentions of his native city.

When Medvedev jokes on Twitter, he always has to contend with his alter-ego Kermlin, who writes twisted versions of his posts with a satirical message, usually in the middle of the night.

Kermlin's identity is a secret, but he gave an interview to Russian Newsweek before the magazine's recent demise, staying in character as Medvedev.

Asked about the Strategy 31 rallies on Triumfalnaya Ploshchad, regularly broken up by riot police, Kermlin said he was baffled why people attended. "I still can't understand why they don't just go straight to the nearest police station. They'd save time."

He said he didn't remember anything about his recent trip to the United States, when he hung out with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and was given a free model of the latest iPhone.

"I was so busy studying the functions of the new iPhone that I don't remember that trip," he admitted. "It cheered me up so much that I didn't get upset even when all the Russian programmers in Silicon Valley said they were never coming back."

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/10/28/in-the-spotlight-dmitrys-parody-a2603