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Wanted: The Muppets

By Kevin O'Flynn

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Cran the Intern looked at me askance. "What did you say?" she asked.

"I said, get me Kermit. And Miss Piggy"

One eye roll later, she rang up Disney and asked about an interview with The Muppets. They should be coming here for the premiere of the new Muppets movie in April, but Disney, for reasons hard to fathom, is not stumping up a private jet for the two.

Back in the old days things were different. As the Soviet Union wound down, the two superpowers began a series of cultural exchanges, telecasts between the countries and one episode cruelly wiped from memory, a Muppet detente, which saw Kermit and Miss Piggy head for a summit with Khrushya the pig from Spokonoi Nochi Malyshi.

What followed was a delicious satire on both countries. Kermit and Miss Piggy are shown driving up to St. Basil's in a black Volga before they meet with Khrushya. The pig is no pushover and is shown making an obscene gesture with his trotters to Kermit, or Кёрмит as his name is on the show, in the initial, tense negotiations before a Muppet telecast is agreed

on.

On the telecast, two video reports are aired on the problems that they see in each other's country — one about a dissident pink elephant in Moscow who is refused permission to leave the country because of his knowledge of Soviet typewriter technology, the other about a homeless bear sacked from his job as a doormat on Wall Street. As someone noted on Twitter, the latter is a story that could easily air on Russia Today. Fox News is said to be looking for the elephant as we speak.

The U.S.-Soviet puppets mock both sides of the Iron Curtain in the program, and the viewer realizes how influential Miss Piggy was on the fashionwear of future female Russian bureaucrats.

It was not the only trip to the Soviet Union for the Muppets. Jim Henson, the creator of the show met the father of Soviet puppetry, Sergei Obraztsov, on one trip. The Russian called Henson his "son" in puppetry, and gave him four puppets, including a Fraggle, for his museum.

Kermit previously visited Moscow in 1984 with singer John Denver. The pair went to Spaso House, the U.S. ambassador's residence, and gave a concert to hundreds of children. It was viewing this on YouTube that sparked the idea. If the embassy could bring Kermit over in Soviet times then surely the new Ambassador Michael McFaul could do the same.

Russian state media has gone rabid since McFaul's arrival, accusing him of being the opposition's puppet master. If real puppets are brought in, maybe that could help bring the two countries together, or Miss Piggy could at least karate chop some sense into everyone.

Make the call, McFaul.

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