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Unearthed Home Video Shows Putin on 'Secret' Finland Trip – Yle

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Vladimir Putin on the visit to Finland in the early 1990s. **Yle**

Home video footage has emerged of Russian President Vladimir Putin during a "secret" trip to Finland with his former boss in the early 1990s.

At the time of the trip, Putin served as the decision maker on export permits under St. Petersburg's ex-mayor Anatoly Sobchak.

The home videos, obtained by Finnish broadcaster Yle, showed Sobchak and Putin playing table tennis, fishing, throwing darts and having meals together at a corporate hospitality villa in southern Finland.

The island villa where they stayed is located some 100 kilometers west of Helsinki and was owned by the Finnish company Thomesto, which imported timber from the Soviet Union.

Embed:

A former employee at the company, who requested anonymity, told Yle that “currying favor with Putin and Sobchak could help with smooth business operations and tax affairs in the future.”

Yle characterized the trip as “secret” since Sobchak and Putin had to “travel stealthily” into Finland.

The broadcaster did not name the source of the video or the former Thomesto employee for safety reasons. But Yle said it verified the authenticity of the video and confirmed the filming location.

In parts of the video, the voice behind the camera speaks fluent Russian, suggesting that the person who recorded it was a member of the Sobchak-Putin entourage.

The former Thomesto employee told Yle that he remembered Putin saying he worked as a KGB officer.

”You couldn't get close to Putin, like where you might drink a little booze together and talk about women and life — nothing like that. He was very restrictive about alcohol and didn't smoke cigarettes,” the anonymous source said.

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