Good Bye Lenin!

By Bernd Lichtenberg
BKM:
Our holiday home, Summer 1978
Look here. Here into the camera.
Hands off!
Alex, hold on!
- Dad, help me!
Slowly, cautiously,
almost gently...
the giant colossus...
is placed on the launch site.
Here on the launch site
the result of the great...
community work is demonstrated.
If you want an example to emphasize the famous word:
everyone supplies quality to everyone...
- There he is!
everyone supplies quality to everyone...
- There he is!
... here it can be seen in perfection.

I report:
with spaceship SOJUS 31...
as a member of the international
crew.
On August 26, 1978,
we had reached international standing.
Sigmund Jhn, citizen of the GDR,
was the first German who ever went into space.
However, on this day our
family went really up in smoke.
This is your husband's third stay
in a capitalistic country.
This is your husband's third stay in a capitalistic country.
He stands in for his boss, professor Klinger.
Do you know of any contacts in the West your husband might have?. - No.
Mrs Kerner, how would you describe the state of your marriage?
Has your husband ever talked to you about escape from the Republic?
Mrs Kerner...
Has he talked to you about that?
Allow me to present the Central Committee of the communist party...
Get lost! Leave me alone!
While Sigmund Jhn bravely represented the GDR in the depths of space,
my procreator let a class enemy in a capitalistic country...
screw his brains out.
He never came back.
screw his brains out.
He never came back.
My mother became so sad, that she stopped talking.
She just didn't talk anymore.
Not to us, not to others.
Mum, please come back.
It's so boring at Mrs. Schfer's.
Mum, I love you.
The Sandman excellently adapted to the conditions in space.
But the biggest surprise was that he became very well acquainted...
...with Mascha.
We even had a cosmic marriage on board.
We even had a cosmic marriage on board.
In a few minutes, the sandman and Mascha will come back to Earth.
I hope it was relayed, so that you could see it clearly.
Mother came back after 8 weeks.
It was as if she had been transformed.
Surprise!
- My sweeties!
My Alex. My little cosmonaut.
(Caption) Pioneer Park, Spring 1979
- We never talked about father again.
(Caption) Pioneer Park, Spring 1979
- We never talked about father again.
From this moment on, my mother got married to our socialist Fatherland.
Our home...
is not only
the towns and villages...
As this relation was not a sexual one,
there was a lot of vigour and energy left...
for us kids
and the socialist daily routine.
... is the grass on the sward,
the corn on the field and the birds...
in the air and the animals on the ground...
in the air and the animals on the ground...
My mother became promoter of
the progress of society.
A passionate activist for the
simple needs of the people
and against the small
injustices of life. - Input.
and against the small
injustices of life. - Input.
and against the small
injustices of life. - Input.

Concerning:
maternity dresses. Full-stop.
And now a report on the solemn honouring...
- This is it!
Blue- and and white-collar workers,
scientists and joint farmers,
Blue- and and white-collar workers,
scientists and joint farmers,
artists and veteran workers
came to Berlin today,
to receive the highest honourings
of our country in the Council of State.
to receive the highest honourings
of our country. 
That's you, Mum! ...
... and recognition of outstanding merits during the building up... and development of the socialist social order. 
On the eve of the national holiday... the CC of the SUG traditionally rewards men and women of merit. After a long, untiring training it was time. I, Alex Kerner, was the second German to go to space. Deeper and further than any man before. Rocket launched! I imaged how I would explore the riddles of the cosmos for the good of humanity, how I would look down to our planet and how I would proudly wave to my mother. how I would look down to our planet and how I would proudly wave to my mother. Rocket launched! Test, one, two... The GDR had its 40th anniversary. I had a day off with the PGH TV workshop "Adolf Hennecke"... and felt as if I was on the climax of my male personal magnetism. and felt as if I was on the climax of my male personal magnetism. Left, two, three! Time smelt of change, while an oversized rifle association... had its last performance in front of our house. Alex! What? Alex, there's a lass out there. Should I send her away? Alex, there's a lass out there. Should I send her away? Who is she? - No idea. But she makes a good impression.
Have you slept in your clothes again?
Where's the visitor?
The visitor's name is Paula...
and it's a date, as agreed. Here you are.
Oh no!
- Oh yes, little brother.
Can't your ex-boyfriend take care of her?
- He's on standby duty today.

We stopped at:
of a certain age...

We stopped at:
of a certain age...
... can't and won't wear the panties,
that are offered.
Fullstop. Even in the GDR, there
are not only young princesses on ice and...
exquisitly slim comrades. Full-stop.
- That's good.
You're not downstairs? It's already started.
- Impossible to overhear!
You're not downstairs? It's already started.
- Impossible to overhear!
Well hurry up then. It could be the last time
with these members.
Where's Paula?
- Yeah, where is she? Sleeping again?
Maybe I'll see your
mother on TV. - In the palace?
Maybe I'll see your
mother on TV. - In the palace?
You'll have to look for her with a magnifying glass.
I don't really know if I'll go there.
All of the party's bigwigs are there.
I don't know anyone. Although... I'd like
to see Gorbatschow at close range this once.
There they are celebrating themselves,
all the old bastards.
Well you don't have to watch.
- Mum, don't you notice what's happening there?
And you, what do you want? Do a bunk?
Nothing will change if
they all go away. Let's go on.
It cannot be possible,
that the stouter...
...workers and farmer's wifes...
are punished by the fashion combinates...
...after the 40th year of the existence
of our Republic!
With socialistic salutations...
Hanna Schfer.
In the evening of October 7, 1989
several hundred people united...
for an evening walk,
to promote...
the idea of walking without borders.
Freedom of the press! Freedom of the press!
Cough! Cough hard!
Everything alright?
You alright?
- Thank you!
There're even more Greens.
Alright already!
Form a chain!
No violence! No violence!
You might make it
if you take the subway.
What's your name?
La...
Stop it!
Watch out!
That's my mum lying there!
- Stand still! - My mum's lying there!
Let me go, you asshole!
That's my mum......
Alexander Kerner?
- Yes?
Your mother.
What about mother?
What is it?
Mum had a heart attack.
Unfortunately, the resuscitation attempts were carried out
very late. Your mother's in a coma.
When can we talk to her?
- Alex, Mum's in a coma!
Mr. Kerner, we don't know yet,
whether or not your mother will ever wake up again.
Can you hear me, Mum?
You've got to wake up!
But mother was fast asleep.
In her deep, neverending sleep...
she circled like a satellite
around the events happening...
on our little planet
in our even smaller Republic.
The 9th Convention agreed to Honecker's request,
to relieve him of his duties...
because of health problems
and thanked him for his political life's work.
Congratulations!
Her sleep obscured the retirement of
the esteemed comrade Erich Honecker,
Her sleep obscured the retirement of
the esteemed comrade Erich Honecker,
General Secretary of the CC of the SUG
and Chairman of the GDR's council of state.
(Reporter) Berlin.
This evening the Wall fell.
(German National Anthem) Unity and Justice
and Liberty...
(German National Anthem) Unity and Justice
and Liberty...
Mother slept through a classical concert
at the City Hall of Schneberg.
And the start of a gigantic and
unique waste collection.
And the start of a gigantic and
unique waste collection.
Open the gateway!
Stasi begone! Stasi begone!
Mother kept on sleeping. Deeply and firmly.
She missed my
first trip into the West,
and how some comrades conscientiously
protected us workers and peasants.
and how some comrades conscientiously
protected us workers and peasants.
Of course she also missed my
first cultural discoveries
in a new country.
Excuse me, excuse me.
Excuse me, excuse me.
Mothers deep sleep didn't allow her
to participate in the first free polling.
Helmut! Helmut! Helmut!
She missed how Ariane gave up her study
of economic theory...
Enjoy your meal and thank you for choosing Burger King.
... and made her first practical experience
with the circulation of money.
The sleep saved her the moving-in of Ariane's new boyfriend.
Rainer, class enemy and barbecue man.
The furniture from the bedroom
is going to the basement.
The furniture from the bedroom
is going to the basement.
She missed the increasing Westernization of
our 79-square-metre apartment...
The old rubbish with the red dot
is going to the bulk waste, okay?
The old rubbish with the red dot
is going to the bulk waste, okay?
... and Rainer's enthusiasm for the
oriental customs and way of life.
The big hormanal ecstasy
that I experienced watching
a few beautiful legs,
didn't reach into her night.

Shit!
What're you doing there?
- I... the infusion...
And not even the first day of Nurse Lara
exchange angel from the sovjet union,
penetrated her black dreams.
There you are again.
- Hello.
I was worried about you.
- They've put me in clink.
Mother overslept the triumph of
the capitalism. - Relief!
And the coordination of
my hospital visits.
Do you know what I noticed?
When she's in a good mood,
she's carrying her hair loosely.
When she's in a bad mood, she puts them up.
And during the doctor's round,
she chews on her fingernails.
Don't you think
she's got a beautiful smile?
Her sleep ignored,
how heroes of work became unemployed.
Her sleep ignored,
how heroes of work became unemployed.
The PGH TV workshop "Adolf Hennecke"
was winded up.
I was the last one
and I switched off the light.
Then there was the reprise. As a member of the
quick-witted East-West-Team, I applied the reunification very early.
Satellite dishes blossomed
in our landscape.
Denis Domaschke?
Domaschke. Denis Domaschke.
Alexander Kerner?
- Here.
Well, come on. Don't be shy.
Well, come on. Don't be shy.
Hi.
And get along, guys.
Hi.
- Hello.
Knut Vogel?
Hello, Mum. Doctor Wagner said
we should talk to you.
And if I can't be there in person,
I thought it might work like this too.
It's 5 o' clock now.
Most of the doctors are gone
and you've finally got some peace.
Nurse Lara, who's washed you,
should be gone too. If you could see her
you'd surely wake up.
Ariane sends you her regards,
she thinks the idea with the tape is nonsense. Well, you know her.
She's just in the room taking care of Paula who's
getting her teeths and is screaming all the time.
Mother overslept my
unstoppable progress with Lara.
Our first romantic rendez-vous followed
It's loud here!
Our Russian teacher came from Minsk
and weighed a ton.
And that's all you know
about Russian women?
The wind of change blew
into the ruins of our Republic.
Summer came and Berlin was
the most beautiful place on Earth.
We felt like
being in the center of the world.
Where finally something moved.
And we moved with it.
It's too bad she doesn't
realize any of this.
Well, maybe it's better that way.
Everything she believed in
has dissolved into air in a few months.
Just like that.
And your dad?
- He was a Doctor.
He escaped into the West.
We haven't heard anything from him again.
The future was in our hands,
uncertain and promising.
Good afternoon. We're X TV and we just wanted to...
Hello, do you need a satellite dish?
No money?
Good afternoon!
Do you like football? Then we've got something for you.
Good afternoon. We're X TV and...
We're X TV!
Are you interested in a satellite dish?
This is Vietnam 1, there's Vietnam 2
and back there's the Vietnamese sport channel.
Alright!
To the World Cup!
- To the future! - To us!
Comrade!
At the moment this is just running
on the side.
And later...
I'll do real feature films.
Same label of course.
Watch this, I'll just show you something.
Watch this, I'll just show you something.
That's what I'm working on at the moment. Watch this!
Don't look yet.
Don't look yet, wait...
And... now!
Recognized it?
Now!
That's the famous cut from 2001,
the one with the bone.
The cake represents the spaceship.
Got it now? Yes?
- Ingenious.
Ingenious.
Alright, everybody laugh.
Alright, everybody laugh.
At the beginning of June 1990, the borders
of our GDR were worthless.
Mother kept on sleeping. But I
remembered the old words of the comrades:
"We solve problems by making headway"
and I acted.
Mum?
Mum!
Can you hear me?
Your mother's awakening is a wonder.
But she might not be the same person she used to be.
What do you mean?
There have been some cases in which
the patients didn't recognize their own children: amnesia.
Loss of memory.
Sorry.
Mental confusion. Blending of
long and short-term memory...
Taste and smell irritations,
delayed perception. We don't know,
how badly the brain was damaged.
There are a lot of uncertain possibilities.
I'm sorry to have to say this,
but mother is still in great danger.
I'm afraid I can't give you much hope
that she'll survive the next few weeks.
Well...
Can we take... 
her home with us?
Out of the question.
She is in very good hands here.
It's also simpler for you.
She can't take another heart attack.
You have to keep your mother 
away from any excitement, even any danger of excitement.
And I mean
any form of excitement, Mr. Kerner!
Any excitement.
It's life-threatening.
And this?
And this?
Isn't this a reason to get upset?
My mother doesn't know anything about the Fall of the Wall.
She'll find out about that here immediately.
Your granddaughter.
Your granddaughter.
Mummy.
What's happened?
- You collapsed.
What's happened?
- You collapsed.
I can't... remember.
That's normal. It will come back to you.
You just have to have patience.
And what... what happened?
Well, that was...
- It was October.
I think you wanted to go shopping.
And... there was a big queue in 
front of the store. And it was so hot,
you just collapsed.
- In October?
It was a really hot October.
Back then.
Yes.
And then?
You were in a coma, Mum.
I want to go home.
That I promise you.
We want to celebrate your birthday.
As every year.
We want to celebrate your birthday.
As every year.
Alex, that's complete madness.
- We don't leave her alone, we promised her.
Mum is fatally ill.
It's better for her here. They've got the equipment.
Just this once, be realistic.
- No, you be realistic.
What happens when she doesn't have a single room anymore?
Or when someone lets the cat out of the bag?
She'll hear what is happening outside in here.
She won't take it.
Alright, all of this rubbish has to come out.
Are mum's curtains still in the basement
- You can't be serious.
They're rawlplugged.
Oh great!
- Guess it'll have to be re-plastered.
Oh great!
- Guess it'll have to be re-plastered.
Can you please tell me what he's doing?
- What do you think I'm doing?
What should I think? - What should he think?
- That you have to make way.
Or should we put Mum in the basement?
- Excuse me, I've paying the rent for this flat for 5 months!
Or should we put Mum in the basement?
- Excuse me, I've paying the rent for this flat for 5 months!
Generous of you, Rainer! - For the whole apartment!
that's not even enough for a telephone bill!
And in the East you have to wait 10 years to get a telephone connection!
- Can't you just...?
Mum has to find the room
in the same condition she left it in. The doctor said
she has to stay in bad okay?
So it's only about this one room.
And when she's better, we'll see what we'll do.
- You didn't get what the doctor said. Mum will probably...
That's what you said 3 months ago,
when you wanted to switch off the machines.
That was a different situation, you can't compare this!
- What do you want to tell her then, Ariane?
That you've given up your studies,
because you're selling Hamburgers now?
"Enjoy your meal and thank you for choosing Burger King."
- Yeah.
Elevator, hm?
- Broken. - Shit.
You can say that again.
My life changed drastically.
My life changed drastically.
And the day we wanted to take mum home
was ever drawing nearer,
relentlessly like a big Russian tank.
What're you doing sniffling in my cupboard?
- Not in your cupboard. That's from the old clothes collection.
What're you doing sniffling in my cupboard?
- Not in your cupboard. That's from the old clothes collection.
And how do you look?
It would be nice if you would think a little for a change.
Look at this. This garbage is what we used to wear.
Sign here.
The physiotherapist is coming
Your mother is going at her own responsibility.
You know how I think about this.
Where is the previous Doctor, by the way?
Doctor Wagner, he went to Dsseldorf.
- I understand. And you?
When do you run away?
And you want to lecture me about responsibility.
Please lie down a second.
Why?
- Please. Just lie down.
If there's another cardiac arrest:
short, strong thumps on the chest.
Careful! She mustn't wake up.
- Alright, boss!
Ariane and I'll set up a schedule.
And there's the physiotherapist.
There's always someone with her. It'll work.
Most GDR citizens already exchanged
their savings cashlessly.
There are only 2 weeks left.
You should hurry. Because as Gorbatschow once said:
He who is late...
- Excuse me?.
will be punished all his life. - I can't hear it anymore.
- Excuse me!
Could you tune down the radio please?  
My mother needs rest.  
Alright, boss.  
Don't you want to introduce us?  
- Oh yes, of course. This is Lara.  
Hello, Lara.  
Could you let me past, please?  
Hello, Christiane!  
Alex! What is it?  
Hello? Alex!  
Nothing's changed in here.  
What should have changed?  
Oh, if you're bored,  
you can listen to cassettes.  
I'm afraid the radio receiver is broken.  
But I'll repair that.  
- Alex?  
It's good to know  
you're not alone.  
When your father...  
When he was suddenly gone...  
I didn't think I'd make it.  
I never told you that...  
I thought about laying hands upon myself.  
But you visited every day.  
And you talked about school and Sigmund Jhn.  
You heard that?  
I'm sorry to cause you so much work.  
I can't even use the toilet by myself.  
- Mum.  
That doesn't matter.  
The important thing is for you to get well.  
I'll try hard.  
You have to rest now.  
I'll just go to the shop,  
but Ariane is still there.  
Oh, Alex...?  
I'm craving for Spreewood gherkins.  
Can you fetch me some?  
No problem, Mum.  
That's what I thought.  
At the end of June 1990 the shops of  
our socialist Fatherland were emptied.  
Real money was coming in from the country
behind the Wall. While most citizens queued in long lines in front of the Republic banks with their usual patience... we were still frantically looking for mother's bankbook. Yearned for by everyone, the German Mark flooded our little community. Halleluja, Halleluja... Halleluja, German Mark! (Song) Such a day, so wonderful... And the money was exchanged 2 to 1.

**Germany won 1:**

Unstoppable shot!
Germany is one-nil up by Lothar Matthus!
Mocca Fix? - Haven't got that anymore.
Filinchen Crispbread? - Not for sale anymore.
Spreewood gherkins?
- Goodness, where do you live, boy?
We've got the German Mark now. And there you come asking for Mocca Fix and Filinchen?
Over night, our grey store was transformed into a colourful product paradise.
Over night, our store was transformed into a colourful product paradise.
And I became the king as a customer.
They're from the Netherlands.
Good afternoon, Mr. Ganske.
That's how far they've driven us already... that we have to go fishing in the garbage.
Mister Ganske, have you still got Spreewood gherkins?
What?
- Spreewood gherkins!
I'm sorry, young man.
I'm unemployed myself. An empty glass would do, too.
I wanted to introduce Rainer to Mum today.
Later.
We don't want to demand to much of her.
Perhaps you're right.
Yes.
I'm afraid there was a supply shortage for Spreewood gherkins.
It's alright. These are fine too.
Listen, you really don't have to take
care of me all the time.
It's awkward for me.
- Mum.
No, really. Maybe...
... you could put the TV next to the bed.
Then I'll manage by my own.
Watching TV still is too tiring for you.
- But why? Why shouldn't I...
be able to watch TV?
- We'll ask the Doctor.
Mum, we have to talk to you about something.
It's like this...
We wanted to ask you if...
We need your authorization to access your bank account.
- What is it?
Do you need money?
- No. No.
It's just that you can't go walk
the bank by yourself anymore.
And it would simply be better if...
you sign this.
Yes, and...
maybe now would be best.
But there's no hurry is there?
You're keeping something from me?
Has something happened? Are you in debt?
Please trust us, it's important!
Before I let you have all my money,
I have got a right to know what it's for don't I?
All right.
It was supposed to be
a surprise but...
We received a notification.
From Zwickau.
We can fetch our "Trabant" (GDR car).
From Zwickau.
We can fetch our "Trabant" (GDR car).
After only 3 years?
And for that we need the money
that you've saved.
You don't think...
I got my money at the bank?
I've hidden it.
And where?
- Where?
I forgot.
I've totally forgotten, it's all gone.
- Mum, just think.
Father is coming home late today,
don't you think?
Mum...
That's alright.
Soon you'll be better again.
We'll celebrate your birthday.
As every year.
With the house community.
We have always celebrated it.
This is the First German Television
with the news.
Comrade Ganske watches West-TV?
Comrade Ganske fell in love.
During a vacation in Hungary.
With a pensioner from... Munich.
Since then his love for the party has suffered.
Oh.
- Well...
Are you finished?
I'm sorry I'm late again.
- There it is. Even with a balcony.
Since some citizens didn't even return from their
vacation in Hungary,
Since some citizens didn't even return from their
vacation in Hungary,
the apartment market in the Capital eased considerably.
There were deserted apartments everywhere,
which we only had to enter.
The guy moved to the West last year.
A colleague gave me the hint.
The guy moved to the West last year.
A colleague gave me the hint.
Get a load of that! - Get a load of that
- It's working! - Tempo-beans!
Globus green peas!
That can't be true.
Mocca Fix Gold!
I've been looking for that all the time!
Can I have that?  
I have to go.  
Sleep on...  
Morning, Mum.  
Morning, Alex.  
Are you in a hurry?  
- I have to go to work.  
Alex, please remember the TV.  
- Let's talk about that later.  
Alex, please remember the TV.  
- Let's talk about that later.  
Oh and about my birthday.  
Invite Klapprath and perhaps a few pupils.  
As if the fucking gherkins weren't enough trouble already.  
Now she wants to watch TV.  
What should I do?  
- Yeah, Houston. We got a problem.  
Yeah, and now? - I thought you might have an idea.  
No, I meant the picture.  
Oh.  
Now?  
- Nope.  
It didn't work very long.  
- Semi-finale! I'll just go over to the Pollnicks.  
Then go already.  
Excuse me.  
Are those gherkins from the Spreewood?  
Nope, from the Netherlands.  
Just show her something old.  
- What do you mean?  
Old East-TV stuff on video tape.  
News from last year? She'll notice for sure.  
Ah, I don't think so. It was always the same rubbish.  
- Where should I get the videos from?  
I haven't even got a recorder.  
- Bad enough.  
What's the score?  
What's the score?  
Beckenbauer, Rudi Vller...  
You don't want to see it...  
Germany made it into the finale!  
While the world time clock at the Alexander Square  
rushed towards mother's birthday,  
a tiny round ball united the social development...
of the split nation and let things, that belonged
together, grow together.
I slaved away like a Hero of Labour to resurrect
the GDR in every detail
in mother's room until this day.
Have the cross-word puzzles already been solved?
- Untouched like a virgin.
Great. I'll take them all.
Oh and these ones too.
They laid my daughter off too.
All of a sudden it was: "Thank you, and goodbye."
And for that we worked for 40 years, oh leave me alone......
They'll even drop the TV ballet.
Don't you do anything apart from watching TV?
To get back to my mother. The problem is that
she doesn't know about the Fall of the Wall
- Enviable.
And it's her birthday next week.
She would really be happy about a visit.
Have you really got it now?
I don't want to hear one false word.
And our 20 Marks?
- The work comes first.
The first guests were invited.
Others still had to be persuaded.
A lot of people of the Polytechnical Secondary School
"Werner Seelenbinder"...
had withdrawn to their private lives.
Including Doctor Klapprath.
Once headmaster and outstanding
teacher of the People.
Once headmaster and outstanding
teacher of the People.
We were all valuable people.
Isn't that right, Alex?
I admired your mother.
She was an outstanding educator.
I admired your mother.
She was an outstanding educator.
And an excellent human being.
That's why she was neutralized.
Some comrades in the collective
thought her to be too...
idealistic.
Ever since your father...
Her idealism was well-respected, but...
in the daily school routine, it...
 can become problematic sometimes.
And then you simply gave her the boot.
You still owe her something.
- Yes.
You're a Dispatcher. Can you remember that?
- Dispatcher? In the East?
Yes, of course in the East. You organize the
purchasing of a Mitropa-Restaurant.

Write this down:
School Education EOS Juri Gagarin.

Write this down:
School Education EOS Juri Gagarin.
And you were Group Council Chairman with
the Pioneers. - Group Council... what?
Group Council Chairman.
- That's enough.
I won't use those plastic diapers anymore.
That's going too far.
Got it?
Yes, Group Council Chairman.
Here you are, 30 broadcasts of "Current Camera",
"A Day in the West". It's all copied.
Sponsored by the country's picture library
and a very charming Denis.
I hope that'll work.
What are you doing crawling on the ground?
- That's the cable for the antenna so you can watch TV?
We've got the World Cup. Truly a gift.
There is no better time to
supply satellite dishes to the East.
Okay? Got it? We come to phase 3...
What was that?
- No idea. Interferences, happens from time to time.
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and welcome
to the "Current Camera".
Hard provocation against the border.
Protests in the Chancellor's office in the FRG (West Germany).
Chip-Power GDR.
The foreign press acknowledges achievements...
Things are running outside
and I feel so useless in here.
Can't you put a note on the house community's pin board?
Whoever's got any problems can come to me.
I can write inputs from bed.
I don't know.
You shouldn't exert yourself.
Morning, Alex. Is it time already?
You want a swig? You want a swig?
- Oh holy shit!
Shit. Shit, yes? Shit!
Goodness, goddamn shit!
I feel sick.
While many loudly thought of themself
being the World Cup holders of tomorrow,
While many loudly thought of themself
being the World Cup holders of tomorrow,
sounds from the past
came out of mother's bedroom.
Our home
is not only the towns...
and villages...
Our home is also
all the trees in the forest...
Our home...
is the grass on the sward,
the corn on the field...
and the birds...
in the air and the animals on the ground...
and the fishes in the river are the home...
And we love the...
That was wonderful. Thank you. Thank you, children.
You learned that from me, didn't you?
Yes.
Dear Christiane!
We are here... today... here,
because it's your birthday.
And... I would like to wish...
you all the best
in the name of the party direction.
And...
the basket.
For you.
That's kind of you. Thank you.
Klapprath.
Rosenthaler Kadarka... Mocca Fix Gold...
Globus green peas.
The colleagues and... the comrades...
of the POS "Werner Seelenbinder"... they...
would like to thank you in particular
for all the years,
Christiane, that you... were...
a... good colleague...
and... a dear comrade...

And anyway, I wish you all the best
for your birthday and remain the same person you are...
Christiane.

Dear comrade Kerner...
All the best...
and... good health...
and that everything will be
as it used to be again.
Lara, come here.

This is Lara.
An exchange student from the Soviet Union.
Her dad is a teacher for the deaf and dumb.
Don't marry him too early.
- Mum.

Even though the thing with the flat
will work out earlier then.
My Alex can be
a real block-head sometimes.
And Rainer...
that's my Ariane's new boyfriend.
He... he is a...
Dispatcher.
- Right, I'm a Dispatcher.
I used to be with them myself...
All the best from the heart... Pioneers!
I used to be with the
Free German Pioneers...
Thank you, Rainer.
As a Group... um...
Cha...
Group Chairman... back then...
Thank you!
Be ready, be ready!
Thank you, Rainer!
Yes, Mum. Another year is over.
What's changed?
Not much really.
Paula got her teeth and a new dad.
And me... yes.
Unfortunately, we cannot go over to
the Caf Moskow to drink to your health,
but we're all together.
And that's the most important thing.
We didn't always make it easy for you,
but you were always there for us.
And, by any rate, I can't think of
a better family than ours.
And that's what I wanted to thank you for.
Mum, you're the best mother in the world.
Alex?
And we all love you.
Alex?.
What's the matter?
What's that?
That's...
Yes, what's the meaning of that?
I don't know what the comrades are doing there again...
A fata morgana.
That's from the West.
It's a mirage.
It will have been approved somehow.
Please calm down, Mum!
There's an explanation for everything. Right...
Boys, please sing something, will you?
Lara! Wait a moment, I... Lara?.
"Build up, build up".
What's the matter all of a sudden?
Build up.
For a better future...
we build up our home...
I'm sorry for your mother.
What you're doing is too scary for me.
And what is this nonsense
about my father being a teacher for the deaf and dumb.
He was a simple cook, you know that.
- But she rejoiced in that.
What should I've told her?
That he's dead? In her state?
You mean to say, when you're lying already,
it doesn't make any difference anyway.
Cheers for her,
cheers for her...
Lara!
Cheers for her,
cheers for her...
three cheers for her!
Cheers, cheers, cheers!
Just a little further away.
Just a little further away.
Just a little more..
Watch out, will you? We're filming here!
- Can I see your authorization?
Didn't he inform you?
- Me? Who?
Oh, what was his name?
- Something with "M".
I'll just go and ask around.
Until then, you don't film anything!
Got the logo? - Yes.
Sharpness on me?- Yes.
We're waiting for the evening sun.
- Don't overdo it, the guy will be back soon.
Just you wait.
With the evening sun it'll look brill.
When I stared at the clouds on that day,
I realized that the truth
was just a doubtful matter,
that I could adapt to mother's
familiar surroundings.
familiar surroundings.
I only had to study the language
of "Current Camera"...
and spur on Denis' ambition
as a film director.
Today Gnther Mittag, secretary for Economy
in the CC of the SUD,
visited the Coca Cola group in West Berlin.
The reason for the comrade's visit are...
details of the completed
trade agreement between Coca Cola...
and the VEB Drink Collective Combine Leipzig.
Security officers of West Berlin hinder
the work of the GDR television.
Surely, the capitalistic press
censors find the loss the mighty
Coca Cola group has suffered against the
VEB Drink Collective Combine Leipzig...
in the patent procedure too embarrassing...
Please let the GDR television
work undisturbed!
- That's it, I'm calling the police!
A testimonial of international
scientists now finally confirmed
to the Collective Combine,
that the original Coca Cola flavour
was developed in the 50s
in laboratories of the GDR. Back to the studio.
Coca Cola is a socialist drink?
I thought, Cola existed before the war.
Don't you understand, Mum?
The West ripped us off all these years!
Until the end of August
- Now I remember!
What?
- Where I hid the money.
In the living room. In the small chest of drawers.
In the left drawer
under the wax paper.
The old rubbish with the red dot
is going to the bulk waste.
How could I forget?
Hey, here I am!
- Oh, hello!
And?
Has she swallowed it?
- Yes, of course. - Really?
Has she really swallowed it?
- I'm telling you.
They've driven us this far!
- Good evening, Mister Ganske.
They betrayed us and sold us out!
The lack of sharpness didn't irritate her?
- No.
And for that we worked 40 years...
- We could rebuild a studio.

We would have different possibilities with a blue box.

What... what are you doing there?
And? What should we do with it?
- Exchange it, of course.

I'm sorry, but the deadline expired
I'm sorry, but the deadline expired

But it's a special case.
- We've only just found it today.

It's even okay for us,

if you exchange 1 to 4 or 1 to 5...

I'm afraid there is no prolongation.

And we wouldn't have exchanged cash anyway.

That can't be!
- It has to be possible!

I'm sure you heard me. Time's up!
- Your time is up soon, you bastard!

These are 30,000 East Marks! That was our money,

for 40 damned years!

Now you Western fuck want to tell me,

this isn't worth anything?

Please leave our premises now.

Keep your hands off! And what are you all gawking at?

It used to be your money, too!

Keep your hands off! You assholes!

Are you going mad or what?

I felt like a Commander of a submarine in the Northsea-Fleet,

whose battle-hardened steel skin had sprung a leak.

Everytime I closed a leak,

another one opened.

Ariane denied being my brother in arms,

the class enemy raised his Cola-flag

and a fresh wind from the West blew mother's East money around my ears.

What're you laughing about?
- Yell.

Why?
- You have to vent some air.

Open up your valves. Just yell!

In Summer 1990, the German
national team exceeded the plan... and became World Cup holder.
And mother kept on getting better.
The pullover marked "Size 48" has the width of a "Size 54"
The pullover marked "Size 48" has the width of a "Size 54"
and the length of a "Size 38". Full-stop.
I don't know how the employees of Milena come to these measurements.
In the Capital there are no people who are so small and square. Full-stop.
Christiane, that's good.
If it's our fault...
If it's... our fault...
that we cannot accommodate the Central Plan with our sizes, comma...
we would like to apologize for that. Full stop.
In this case...
we shall endeavour to become, comma...
in the future, smaller and squarer. Full stop.
With socialist salutations.
Hanna Schfer.
Hello, Mrs. Schfer.
Oh Alex. It's so nice to talk to your mother.
It feels just like living in the past.
A little changes here and there
and I'll send it to the OTTO mail-order company.
Our home is also all the trees in the forest...
Our home is also all the trees in the forest...
Our home...
I've got some nice visitors.
That's Frank and Christian... of my former class.
- Hello.
Hello.
Mrs. Kerner has to rest now, alright?
Bye.
- Alex, why?
Now scram!
- And the 20 Marks? - What 20 Marks?
Sascha said,
we'd get 20 Marks for that!
Hello, Mr. Mehlert. - Hello, Alex.
Problems with the toaster?
My mother will be happy,
just go ahead. And you get out of here!
And tell your mates, I don't want to see a Pioneer here ever again. - Alright, boss.
Have you gone nuts?
You can't just let the
boys in here!
But why? She was pleased, wasn't she?
You can't do anything right with you Easties!
Having something to complain about is what matters to you most!
You're just like your mother
and her stupid GDR-inputs.
My mother doesn't grumble!
She's trying to change
the conditions of the society step by
step through constructive criticism. - Sure.
And you were never interested in that!
- Nope.
Haven't you noticed?
We're in the socialist veteran's club.
Good evening.
Why don't you take admission fees?
Yeah, let's charge admission fees!
You be quiet.
He's bought a Trabbi (GDR car). - Really?
An estate car.
That can't be happening. Paula will get a defect,
if this goes on much longer. - Oh come on!
our health, did they?
I've really got my doubts about you.
Shit. Shit!
Well done. Get a cloth.
What is it? Nosebleeds again.
I know it's a little stressful at the moment
I'd also prefer,
if we didn't have to...
- I saw dad... earlier.
Where?.
- At work.
I recognized his voice immediately.
What did he say?
Um, 3 cheeseburgers and
And... what does he look like?
He drives a Volvo estate car and
got glasses with a golden rim.
What did you tell him?
Enjoy your meal and thank you
for choosing Burger King.
Enjoy your meal and thank you
for choosing Burger King.
My father lived somewhere in this City.
I saw his image in my mind.
A fat guy who stuffed himself with cheeseburgers
and chips all day.
He lived in his world and I lived in mine.
He didn't have anything to do with me
and I didn't have anything to do with him.
Hold still or it won't work.
Will it take much longer?
'cause I have to be home
in 2 hours at the latest.
You always have to be somewhere in 2 hours.
It's getting boring.
Oh great. I got a sick mother,
a demanding job...
and a miffed girlfriend.
- I've got my exams in 2 days.
It's second nature to you.
This little bit of putting a plaster on.
Then I can stop learning, can't I?
I was well-meant.
I believe in you.
Lara, stop this shit, please!
You have to tell your mother!
- What?
You have to tell your mother!
- Not because of me, but because of her!
Lara!
- What?
Shit! Lara!
The life in our little country
became ever faster.
Somehow we were all just like atoms
in a big particle accelerator.
But away from all the frantic pace of the new time there was a place of quiet,
But away from all the frantic pace of the new time there was a place of quiet,
silence and leisureliness,
where I could finally have a lie-in.
Well, Paula. Alex didn't use to be so tired when he came home from work.
Our Paula's learning to walk, Alex!
There! There!
There!
See? I can do it, too.
Paula! See?
My little Paula. Come to your Granny.
Come, come.
Now we'll show Alex,
what we can do, okay?
Right...
Now let's see just how far your Granny can walk.
Hi! - Hi!
- Good afternoon.
Young man,
can I just sit down for a moment here please?
Of course.
You're not from here, are you?
- Nope, from Wuppertal.
From the West?
Mum?
Mum, what are you doing? Come on.
- Mum!
What is it with you?
You can't just get up! Shit.
What's actually happening here?
Central Committee of the Socialist...
Unity Party of...
Germany.
Sound is in order.
- Right.
Right. I'm ready.
- Camera running.
Berlin.
Still running.
Berlin.
In a historic special session of the
Central Committee of the Social Unity Party of Germany...
the General Secretary of the SUG's CC
and Chairman of the GDR's Council of State,
Comrade Erich Honecker, in a great matter of humanitarian politeness,
consented to the entering of the country by people from the FRG
who've been requesting exile at the GDR embassies in Prague and Budapest.
In this development, Honecker sees...
a change in the East-West-relations
and promised every man and woman entering the country...
a change in the East-West-relations
and promised every man and woman entering the country...
a welcome money of 200 East Marks.
Unemployment,
bad future prospects...
and the increasing election victories
of the neo-Nazi Republicans...
made the unnerved FRG citizens
turn their backs
on the capitalism to
try and start...
a new life in the country of workers and farmers.
Here they park,
the new GDR citizens from the FRG.
The entering FRG citizens
were accommodated in the Berlin districts...
"Center" und "Friedrich's Grove".
The CC of the SUG...
created the campaign "Solidarity West"
because of the historic situation,
to make sure all the new citizens
receive proper living space.
Somehow I have to admit
that my game started to break free.
Maybe the GDR I created for my mother,
was the one I would have liked to have.
Citizens who are ready
to accommodate a refugee from the FRG,
please report to their
Section Plenipotentiary.
How many are there already?
I don't know. Ten, twenty thousand?
Look at that.
The people want to come into our country.
Where are they all going to live?
- They'll find something.
You've heard it, they're taking care of it.
No, children. This is our responsibility.
We have to help.
But how do you think we can?
I mean, there's no room left in here.
Our holiday home.
- Our holiday home?
We could do it up.
I wanted to get out there anyway.
Congratulations. You've done a great job.
Now she wants to go to the holiday home.
You'll have to redecorate the entire City.
Why don't you start?
But I'm telling you one thing,
I won't take this any further.
Ariane and I'll get a bigger apartment.
In 4 weeks we're out of here.
What?
I'm pregnant.
Again?
Can't you be more careful?
Don't you think Paula is enough? And Mum?
You can't leave me alone!
- Then take some refugees.
You're so cynical.
You want her to die, don't you?
And so the unity of our little
family was restored.
That's your child. And this is the heart.
Amazing!
An all-German baby was on its way.
And all-German contracts...
An all-German baby was on its way.
And all-German contracts...
were signed.
In Moskow, they calculated
that 2 and 4 equals one and drank
Krim Champagne to all-German brotherhood.
In Berlin we took our
first all-German trip.
I'm not a little child anymore.
Please take off the cloth.
Don't look!
Where are we going?
- The surprise stays a surprise!
The Trabbi (GDR car) smells so new.
What colour does it have?
You've waited 3 years,
another half an hour won't make a difference. - That's right.
Mum?
Oh, it's beautiful. Sky-blue.
Right, and now turn around.
Oh my god. The garden.
Remember the time Alex
locked himself in the bathroom?
We knocked and knocked. Not a sound.
I climbed out of a hole
and watched all the excitement from the tree.
And I laughed so hard,
I wet myself.
What's happened in the 8 months
I overslept?
Is she asleep? - Yeah.
You've become adults,
that must be it.
You look more and more like your father.
Mum...
I've lied to you all this time.
It's all different from what you think.
Mum, what are you talking about?
- Your father...
Your father didn't stay in the West
because of another woman.
I lied.
And I also lied about...
not hearing anything from him again.
He wrote letters to me... and to you.
They're all... in the kitchen cupboard.
They made things so hard for him.
Just because he wasn't in the party.
It was dreadful.
He didn't let anyone notice.
But I knew.
I... knew
and I couldn't help him.
And then... there suddenly was
this congress in West Berlin.
We only had 2 days to think.
Your father wanted to stay in
the West and I...
I was supposed to follow with you.
Well, I couldn't do it.
I... I was very frightened.
You don't know, how it is.
Filling in an exit permit...
with 2 children. You can't get out immediately.
You have to wait - endlessly!
Sometimes even years. And you...
They could have taken you away from me.
Do you understand?
Yes.
I didn't go.
It was the worst mistake of my life.
I know that now.
I lied to you. Please forgive me!
My dear Robert...
I thought about you so often...
I would so much like to
see you once more.
The same evening
mother's condition suddenly worsened.
Your mother had another heart attack,
just as I feared.
At the moment, she's relatively stable.
But I'm afraid...
we have to expect the worst.
I'm sorry.
The doctors can be wrong.
- Alex, don't lie to yourself.
Here, I found it.
He lives in Wannlake.
I know, it's her last wish.
But I couldn't bring myself to go there.
Mum's not going to die.
Bye.
Now you can accommodate someone after all.
Accommodate? Who?
Someone from the West.
You have to sleep.
If you want you can sleep
lie down in the nurses' room.
There he was. The idol of my youth.
Like a conjured spirit
from my childhood: Sigmund Jhn.
Like a conjured spirit
of my childhood Sigmund Jhn.
He didn't give autographs, he didn't
talk to Pioneers about the secrets of the universe,
the freedom you have in zero gravity
or the eternity of the cosmos.
He drove a small, stinking Lada-Taxi.
- Where do you want to go?
  To Wannlake.
- I know what you're thinking.
  That's what many people think.
But that's not who I am.
We were flying through the night.
Just like through the depths of the cosmos.
Light-years away from the solar system,
past strange galaxies...
with unknown lifeforms,
we landed in Wannlake.
Could you wait a moment?
I won't be long.
Good evening.
- Hello. Come in.
  Is Mr. Kerner there?
- The buffet is outside. - Over there.
  Hello.
  Good evening.
Hello! Good evening!
Hello!
Sandman, dear Sandman,
it isn't time yet...
We send the evening greetings...
before all the children have to go to bed.
You surely have time left.
You surely have time left.
Hello.
- Hello. - Hello.
May I watch the Sandman with you?
- Only if you tell us your name.
May I watch the Sandman with you?
- Only if you tell us your name.
Alexander.
Look,
today the sandman is an astronaut.
Where I come from it's called cosmonaut.
Where do you come from?
- From a different country.
Hi, you little bears.
- Hello, Dad.
Hello. How are you?
Fine.
So, are you also a fan of the Sandman?
Yes, I am.
Excuse me, do we know each other?
- Yes, we do.
Yes. I can't think of it.
Please help me.
His name's Alexander.
Alex?
Robert. Robert!
We're all waiting for you out here.
Robert, come out!
Robert, we all know that you like to hide
in the bathroom on these occasions.
Dad, you have to give your speech.
- Robert, come out here.
I'll be back.
Oh, I see him.
You've kept us waiting.
Onto the stage!
Well, I thank you
all for coming here.
Thank you and...
enjoy the evening. Thanks.
enjoy the evening. Thanks.
I'm sorry for having this
party here tonight.
Had I known you'd come, I...
Strange, I've always thought you've got
a swimming pool.
We've got a lake nearby.
My god, I didn't even recognize you.
Now I got 2 new brothers and sisters, hm?
For 3 years, every day I waited
for a message from you.
Every day.
It was my most fervent wish.
Why have you come?
Mum's dying.
She had a heart attack.
She wants to see you once more.
What was it like up there?
- Up there?
Oh... up there.
It was wonderful up there.
Just very far away from home.
The Wall is no more.
There's no frontier!
It's not that bad.
It's all just one country now!
I don't understand a word. It's all untrue.
- That's why you have to play along.
And why did I come back to the GDR?
I don't know. Just think of something!
No, it's absurd. I can't do that.
You just have to overcome it,
then it'll be easy.
Mum.
- Yes.
Ouch.
I want to get up.
How do I look?
You can go in now.
And please remember, not a word!
- Yes, yes.
What did you talk about?
- Is that important?
How long has he been in there?
- More than an hour.
I hope he doesn't let the cat out of the bag.
The summer was over. I decided to end
the whole sham.
But once more we were about
to celebrate the anniversary of our socialist Fatherland.
But in contrast to reality...
as a dignified farewell.
Pst!  
Yes? Camera running. Start at 3.  
Dear citizens of the  
German Democratic Republic.  
If you've lived to see the wonder  
of watching our blue planet...  
from the depths of the cosmos...  
As mum hardly couldn't wait,  
we simply moved the GDR's anniversary...  
from October 7 to October 2, 1990:  
The eve of the reunification.  
And?  
Here. My best film yet, buddy.  
Too bad no one but your mother  
will ever see it.  
Thank you, Denis. Without you, it would never...  
- Yeah, it's alright. Here you go.  
Zoom off, before it gets sentimental.  
And tell me how it was!  
On the occasion of today's annual anniversary of the GDR,  
Erich Honecker resigned...  
from all his functions.  
What?  
We ensure our friends in the world  
that the socialism...  
(Reporter) In his speech on the ceremony for  
the GDR's anniversary...  
in the Republic's palace, Erich Honecker  
justified his decision by saying that  
the changes achieved in the GDR in the past few months...  
completed his political life's work.  
Erich Honecker congratulated...  
the new SED's CC General Secretary and  
Chairman of the GDR's council of state:  
Sigmund Jhn.  
- What, Jhn?  
In 1978, Sigmund Jhn was the first German  
cosmonaut in space.  
The new head of state addressed the  
GDR's population in the evening.  
Dear citizens of the  
German Democratic Republic.  
If you've lived to see the wonder  
of watching our blue planet...
from the depths of the cosmos,  
you see things differently.  
Up there, in the depths of space,  
the people's lives...  
Up there, in the depths of space,  
the people's lives...  
seem small and insignificant. You ask yourself  
what humanity has accomplished.  
Which objectives did we set,  
which objectives did we realize?  
Today is our country's anniversary.  
It's a very little country,  
seen from the cosmos.  
But still thousands of people  
came to us last year.  
People who we looked to as enemies and  
who want to live here with us today.  
We know our country is not perfect.  
But what we believe in,  
inspired a lot of people  
in the whole world.  
Maybe we have drifted off course  
from time to time.  
But we collected ourselves.  
Socialism doesn't mean  
living behind a wall. Socialism means  
reaching out to others,  
and living with others. Not just to dream  
about a better world,  
but to make the world a better place.  
but making it a better world.  
I have therefore decided  
to open the GDR borders.  
Shortly after the Fall of the Wall,  
thousands of FRG citizens...  
seized the opportunity  
to visit the GDR for the first time.  
Many want to stay. They're looking  
for an alternative to...  
the hard battle for survival in the capitalistic system.  
- Isn't that wonderful?  
Not everyone wants to join in with career addiction and  
aggressive marketing.  
Not everyone wants
to fight his way through life.
(Song) Such a day,
so wonderful like today...
These people want a different life.
They realize that cars,
video recorders and TVs are not everything.
They are ready to
realize a new life with nothing but
good will, vigour and hope.
Amazing.
My mother survived the GDR
by 3 days.
I guess it was the right thing,
that she never did learn the truth.
She died happily.
She wished for us to
scatter her ashes to the four winds.
That's not allowed in Germany.
Not in the West and not in the East. But we didn't care.
Up there she is floating and
maybe she is looking down at us.
And sees us as tiny
dots on our little Earth.
Just like Sigmund Jhn back then.
The country my mother left
was a country she had believed in
and which we kept alive
until her last second.
A country that in fact never existed like this.
A country that in my memory
will always be connected to my mother.