

Dec. 9, 1987

To: Les
From: Bob, Kim

Re: Naum Chernobelsky Press Conference

The trick at this press conference is to convey steady progress without raising hopes that the Chernobelsky family is going to be on the next plane.

You will not need to review all of the background. The reporters will be given copies of all relevant clips to review, prior to the press conference.

THE NEWS: Naum Chernobelsky has received a letter from the Vinnitza office of prosecution, notifying him that all charges against him have been dropped. This is the most significant positive development since September 1979, when the Chernobelsky family first applied to emigrate.

The letter was received by Chernobelsky as Gorbachev was flying toward the United States.

Last April, when you as you arrived in the Soviet Union, the prosecutor in the Chernobelsky case went into court to ask that his five year prison sentence be reduced to three years of community service. In late summer, Chernobelsky was also told that he could not reapply to emigrate until the sentence was served. Now, he is on the way to overcoming that barrier. Apparently all that remains is for the Kiev prosecuting office, and possibly that in Moscow, to verify the decision made by the local prosecutors. This could take a month, maybe longer. Then, apparently, he will be free to reapply.

His sister, Raisa, talked to Naum today. With his approval, we are setting in motion a strategy for you to talk with emigration authorities in OVIR offices in his home town of Vinnitza, in Kiev (which will review the application and send it on to Moscow) and in Moscow, to urge them to expedite the handling of his application. YOU KNOW THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY MOVES ON ITS OWN TIME TABLE AND EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS IT WILL TAKE ADDITIONAL TIME TO PROCESS THE APPLICATION AND GET REQUIRED APPROVALS. You made your first calls today, reaching Vinnitza. This isn't going to be easy. Tell the story about "can you hear me? "no"! You be following up on Friday. You should also say that you are continuing your efforts through other routes, especially while the Soviet delegation is in town. You also have just received a petition signed by hundreds of Oregonians at the Soviet Jewry rally Sunday which you will be conveying to Gorbachev.

These are obviously very positive developments. Within nine months, Chernobelsky has been released from prison, seen his term reduced from a five year prison term to three years of community service, and now has a letter saying that all charges against him have been dropped.

During this time, you have conducted high level lobbying on his behalf; sent letters to high ranking officials through Bob Sherman during his trip to the Soviet Union in August; organized personal letters from Gorbachev from more than 100 Congressmen; and sent letters to Gorbachev through Dubrinin with Stephen Anderson, who is currently in the Soviet Union.

Things are moving fast, even by Soviet standards, and you will keep up the pressure until Chernobelsky is free. It is important to note, however, that we are, today, not quite back to the point that Chernobelsky was at in September of 1979 -- that is, beginning the application process. The difference is that this time, through you, more than 100 Congressmen are helping push.

You can tell the reporters that they can reach Raisa for comment in Philadelphia. Because she is on a tight schedule, it would be advisable if they did it on a pool basis, and they can feel free to use our phones if several of them would like to talk to her together.