

## **FHS Oral History Project – Roksalana Cisyk**

### **Description:**

Roksalana Cisyk was born in Ukraine, at the time the former Soviet Union, in 1969. She recounted her experiences growing up in the former Soviet Union. Roksalana shared how her worldview on the United States changed once her aunt, who lived in the US, brought items from the capitalist society. She visited the US several times and permanently emigrated to the country in 1994, three years after Ukrainian independence. Roksalana studied applied mathematics in Ukraine and worked for a major corporation that accredited medical institutions in Chicago. She placed the former Soviet Union's model of education, particularly in applied mathematics, higher than what she experienced in Chicago. Roksalana and her family moved to Florida in 2008 for personal and familial reasons. She discussed her involvement in the Ukrainian Project Incorporation, the same organization that hosts the Annual Ukrainian Festival in Orlando (where the oral history took place), and how it remains intimately connected with the Russo-Ukrainian War. In 2024, Roksalana returned to Ukraine after fifteen years, and she described the war conditions she observed. Lastly, she outlined her experiences living in Central Florida generally for the past seventeen years.

### **Transcription:**

00;00;08 - 00;00;26

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** This is Sebastian Garcia interviewing Roksalana Cisyk on February 16th, 2025, at the Fourth Annual Ukrainian Festival Vatra Orlando for the Florida Historical Society Oral History Project. Please state your name, date of birth and where you were born.

00;00;26 - 00;00;35

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Roksalana Cisyk. 6-15-69. And I was born in Ukraine—at that time, former Soviet Union.

00;00;35 - 00;00;43

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What was life like growing up in the former Soviet Union in the 1980s?

00;00;44 - 00;01;19

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I'm from west part of Ukraine that was annexed to Soviet Union in 1939. So, it was under Soviet Union power just 30 or 40 years. We didn't experience that much, for me personally, [compared to] what the east part of Ukraine experienced. But on the other hand, we had teachers in universities that finished their studies at the time where there was part of Poland. So they had completely different education, a completely different culture comparing to the Soviet Union one.

00;01;19 - 00;01;28

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And you shared with me before we started recording that you worked as a software engineer in Chicago. Did you study that in Ukraine?

00;01;28 - 00;01;41

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I studied in Ukraine. I finished applied mathematics in University Lviv. And then when we came here, I worked for the joint commission of a healthcare organization.

00;01;41 - 00;01;44

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What inspired you to study that career path in Ukraine?

00;01;44 - 00;02;11

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I just love math. Well, at the time, I love to be a doctor, but it was very corrupted, so you had to have a lot of money or power to get into medical institute. But, we didn't have that money. So math was the other thing, and programing just started at that time, and it just happened, and I loved it.

00;02;11 - 00;02;26

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What was the conditions like once the former Soviet Union started to open up a little bit as the 80s ended and the early 90s started?

00;02;26 - 00;04;05

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** It didn't open in the 80s. My aunt was born in the United States. She was American citizen. Her mom came to United States, like, in 1920s or so. She was born in '27 in the United States. And the first time they came to Ukraine was 1939. And they came and World War II started. So it took them a year to come back to the United States. In '91, when the *putsch* happened, I happened to be in Poland with my mom. So we came on Saturday to Poland. Everything was okay. And on Sunday we just went to church, and Monday we came to speak with people. And everybody was telling us that in Moscow there are tanks on the streets and stuff like that. We were not used to stuff like that. Maybe something happened. But it was never on the news. It was only about the capitalistic countries that they were showing that there are riots and stuff like that. So we didn't even know what to do out of it. But yes, after that, we came back because my dad was back in Ukraine, Soviet Union. So we came back and you could feel that the Soviet Union doesn't have that power anymore. Yeah. And then slowly it started to separate, and people started talking more openly. We are thankful that it happened, from economic point of view. It should happen a long time ago. I was glad that they experienced one another. I'm trying to watch what's happening right now in here.

00;04;05 - 00;04;19

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Right. And before you emigrated to the United States in '94, those were three years in which you lived in Ukraine once the Soviet Union fell in '91. What was that like?

00;04;19 - 00;05;28

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** It's difficult to explain because Ukraine didn't want the currency of Soviet Union—rubles—but the stuff in stores were really scarce, we wouldn't have bread or milk, openly. So you have to stay in line to get that stuff. Then they started to introduce coupons. So there was a cutout, and that would entitle you to a loaf of bread or a kilogram of sugar per month. So you had to have rubles and those coupons, and then, they eliminated rubles, so people were just using those coupons for probably a week or two, which was just

printed it out stuff, until people realized that it shouldn't be that way. They came out with I think there was coupons like money, money like currency made. And then I was here when the *hryvnia* was introduced. *Hryvnia* is like old currency of Ukraine before the Soviet Union.

00:05:28 - 00:05:35

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what motivated you to leave Ukraine to come to the United States in '94?

00:05:35 - 00:06:23

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Well, actually, I came here on visit. I wanted to come back. I love Ukraine, I had a lot of friends, I was young. It just happened, it just happened. My parents convinced me. I was talking to them, and that was terrible 90s, as they call it right now, but my mom was trying to say that it is really bad in here—stay another half year, and it was like, stay until the spring. Christmas time is really nice in America and stuff like that. So I'm like, okay, I'm staying half year, and then spring comes and I'm like, okay, I'm going home. And she's like, no, stay, summer is so pretty. So I have to tell that my mom actually convinced me to stay here longer. And, once you are somewhere longer, then you make new friends, you have your job, and so you're making your living in here.

00:06:23 - 00:06:28

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What were your initial impressions about the United States?

00:06:28 - 00:08:03

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Well, as I said, my aunt lived here, so she visited Ukraine quite often. And I remember it was just a difference in that, I remember as a child, I was in school, so when she came and I said, so how come Americans who want to bomb Soviet Union? Because that's what we were taught in school. And she says, no, no, no, no, no, we are not doing that. But you guys are planning to do that, but they don't tell you in school. And those words were eye-opening for me because I wouldn't trust her otherwise because I was told in school. But she mentioned that you shouldn't trust, and that was like second opinion. So every time she would come she would bring—she wasn't very rich in here [United States] but it still was better than in there [former Soviet Union]. She would bring stuff that smells so nice. And different colors. You were used to more like black, white and gray, brown. And stuff that she would bring would be bright colors. And candy smell so good. I mean, everything smells so different and go. When I came here, she used to live in New York. She picked me up from the airport, and we visited her friend on the way because it was a two hour drive, and I noticed the streets were so pretty and so clean. She lives on the mountains, and it is full time, so the leaves started to turn yellow, but it wasn't dirty. It was just clean and bright. Very pretty. Very pretty.

00:08:03 - 00:08:10

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And, once you permanently settled here, did you have any difficulty adjusting to life in the US?

00:08:10 - 00:09:52

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Absolutely. First thing because it's a different language. So I started to work as a babysitter in a Ukrainian American family. And then I moved to my friend in

Chicago, and there was an American family. And then after those two years with American family, I just came, because I wasn't shy of my English anymore, so I could understand much better. So that was one thing. And then my imagination of programing or software engineer in the United States was that it is so high level that I would never be able to make it. But actually, when it came to the job interview, I was picked out right away. That was my first job interview, that I got a job, and I worked there for more than ten years. And, after one month, people started to come to me and ask questions. So I was more confident. And I have to tell you that the education, especially the mathematical physical education was very high. I still believe it was very, very high in Soviet Union. We had really good scientists, like Sikorsky with helicopters and with rockets. I think the education was. Well, I'll put it this way. We were educated for the government because the government owned all the factories and plants and stuff like that. So they were interested to have like really good workers. So they invested a lot into education. And then you work for the government all the time. So they make money. But yes, education was very, very good.

00;09;52 - 00;09;58

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And talk to me about your ten year experience working for that company in Chicago as a software engineer.

00;09;58 - 00;10;41

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I loved the company. I loved what they were doing. They accredit medical establishments, hospitals. It's one of the biggest companies that accredit medical stuff in United States and internationally. And, if the hospital would not [*intelligible audio*], they would not be entitled to Medicare, Medicaid and stuff like that. They did a good job. I still believe that's a nice company. It was a very good experience. Great people around, I can tell all the good things about it. Yeah, I loved what I was doing.

00;10;41 - 00;10;51

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what motivated your to or what inspired you to leave Chicago to come to Florida?

00;10;51 - 00;11;10

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Family. Family. My husband wanted to move because of his allergies in Chicago. The kids were young. We visited Florida a few times, and then we just moved to try.

00;11;10 - 00;11;20

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And that was 2008, correct, when you moved to Florida? And you came straight to Orlando, or did you go to somewhere else in Florida?

00;11;20 - 00;11;47

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Well as I said, we visited Florida quite often, like 2 or 3 times a year because it was drivable distance. Destin was one of the places. It was like an overnight drive. But when we were thinking about moving and we started to pick places, one of the requirements was to have a young population so kids would have company.

00;11;47 - 00;11;53

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And then, when you came to Florida, your career didn't change? You still were a software engineer or did your career change?

00;11;53 - 00;12;01

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I didn't work; I had tumor in my eye. So that prevents me from working right now.

00;12;01 - 00;12;07

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** How did you acclimate to Central Florida culturally? Did you find a Ukrainian community quickly?

00;12;07 - 00;12;55

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Yes, that's what we were missing. We were missing a lot. I mean, Palm Coast, close to Daytona Beach. So, it was difficult to find. I was looking, especially because of my kids. I was looking for Ukrainian community because I wanted them to speak Ukrainian. And we do speak Ukrainian at home. And they did. But one thing to speak at home and another thing to have friends that can share the same language. So that was difficult. Only one church in Apopka that was Ukrainian. It was more than an hour drive. So it was difficult to do. They grew up as Ukrainians. They read the language, they speak decently, they can speak it, and I still text them in Ukrainian just for fun of it. So they at least have to read it.

00;12;55 - 00;13;02

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Absolutely. I resonate with that. My parents raised me with speaking Spanish and to talk Spanish. So I think that's very important.

00;13;02; - 00;13;02;

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** You speak Spanish now?

00;13;02 - 00;13;20

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Yeah, I speak Spanish. Yep. How would you describe the Ukrainian community in Central Florida? Especially if it's changed since 2008, which is about to be 20 years.

00;13;21 - 00;14;11

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** It did change, especially when the war started. A lot of newcomers were coming with families. It's like generations, I guess, because we have different values, and we have different experience. The young people come, and even in the same culture, they assume that they know everything. And they know that they will do it better than the older generation will tell them, and then it will take time for them to—yeah, we were helping a lot. We are trying to help. There are people who wants to know and, if they absorb, I think they are better off because we hit our stones and, if somebody can admit that and go on smooth trail, that will probably be better. But, I mean, everybody's making their own mistakes.

00;14;11 - 00;14;16

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Right. And how did you get involved with the Ukrainian Project Incorporation?

00;14;16 - 00;14;56

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** We were looking for something that is not religious specific, because there are a lot of religions in Ukraine. We had Orthodox Church and Catholic Church as two major ones. And then we have Evangelical Church and Witnesses of First Day and Baptist Church and stuff like that. So if, Catholic Church would do something the other ones do not want to join because it's different religion. So we were trying to come up with something that went beyond religion, just culture wise. So we would invite everybody. That's how you Ukrainian Project started.

00;14;56 - 00;15;02

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What is the aim of the Annual Ukrainian festival?

00;15;02 - 00;17;01

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** That was all of a sudden. We had celebrated 30 years of Ukrainian independence, and it's in August, we had a great party. And then it started to rain, like we have the summer rains. And then somebody said, okay, we wish it wouldn't rain because it was so much fun. And then we started to think that we would do it, like, yearly and we would try to pick the season. And we decided on the winter because it is less chance of rain [*it was currently raining at the time of the interview*]. But this is actually the first time at this festival that it rains both days. And then we came about in November, started talking like November, but November is Thanksgiving, then Christmas-time, and then January people are busy after Christmas-time and then February. And we thought about—I forgot the word when you don't eat before Easter—so we wanted to do it just before so people can eat meat. And then we thought that people up from up north would be tired of winter by that time. So yes, we thought about February, and we normally would have it on February 24th, and Vasyl probably told you that the war started on that day. Yeah. It just happened that way. And this year, that was the first time that we moved it from that anniversary to the week before. So next week actually would be the third year anniversary of the war. Yeah. We did it once. We had a lot of people from Chicago, Canada, Cleveland. And then we just started doing that annually.

00;17;01 - 00;17;11

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And you mentioned the war. How has the war impacted the festival, or how have you all approached the festival differently because of the war?

00;17;11 - 00;18;06

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Well, the war started the day before the festival, actually. And people came just looking for the company. We didn't know what to do. We wanted to cancel it first. And then one of our performers that that was coming from Toronto, Canada—he is performing actually today as well—I spoke with him. He was at the airport, and I said, “You know what? We are thinking about canceling the festival.” And he's like, “Don't do that. Because when we go to Ukraine, we go in front of the soldiers, and they ask us for some positive thing so they can laugh and forget about that for a little bit.” And so that trigger us to continue. And then we

changed it to the meeting. Yeah. Nobody wanted to sing at that time. But we wanted to talk. I guess that was it.

00;18;06 - 00;18;12

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what other ways has the festival changed since 2022?

00;18;12 - 00;18;56

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** We learned on our mistake. We knew what people liked. So just trying to adjust, and we tried different parks. Everyone had different experiences with those parks. We tried Altamonte Springs, and then we tried Lake Eola—all of them were fun. Every park was different, with pluses and minuses. My favorite one was Altamonte Springs. That's my absolute favorite. I like the setting and people, but this park is okay, except the rain.

00;18;56 - 00;19;05

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Right. What examples from the four years you've been involved with the festival would make you consider it a success?

00;19;05 - 00;20;00

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Ukrainian people know more and more about it even from—I'm not talking about people who come particular for the festival from our other states—but, locally, Florida, we have people coming from Palm Coast. I live in Palm Coast. We have a lot of Ukrainians right now, 4 or 5 Ukrainian stores open. A few Ukrainian spots. So a lot of Ukrainians, with kids especially because those are the people who are escaping the war. So right now, kids, started to grow in, parents who wants to introduce them to Ukrainian culture. And so that's I think they, what they consider success, that people started to know that we have a festival like that, and that's the winter time, and that's here in Florida. And we don't have snow. Normally we have sun...

00;20;00 - 00;20;06

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What do you see in the festival's future moving forward?

00;20;06 - 00;20;56

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** What we find difficult [is] to advertise because depending on the generation, different people use different media these days. It's not like everybody is sitting watching TV and you know they just put advertising on the TV, and it will work. Okay. Younger generation uses Instagram, and we are using Facebook and different apps. And somebody is still watching TV. So it is difficult to come up and also come up with the funds to advertise everywhere. We were just talking this morning how we should advertise if you have events like that. Because people when you meet with somebody and we are telling them about this or the other or concert and they're like, "I wish I would know that." But that, you'll have to think what to do so people would know.

00;20;56 - 00;21;02

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** You shared with me before we started recording that you visited Ukraine in 2023.

00;21;02;26 - 00;21;03;03

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** 24.

00;21;03 - 00;21;08

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** 24. Can you just talk to me about that experience and some of the conditions over there?

00;21;08 - 00;24;41

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Yes. It is very difficult right now. I wasn't there for 15 years, so that was my first time in 15 years. I came to [*names Ukrainian city*], which is the best part. And it's still another—it's experiencing war in a different way because there are a lot of people refugees that find refuge here. So we didn't have too many bombing, and that was interesting because I met with my friends. It was Sunday. I met with my friends, and they said that if you hear siren, you should go inside of the apartment. And I was actually laughing because I'm in Florida right now, used to hurricanes and stuff like that. I said, "You know what? I'm going to sit in the bathtub," and they're [like] "Don't do that, don't do that." They were very serious. And they said that it's not joking matter. I should take it seriously. And I'm like, "yeah, no, no, I know, I know, I have hurricane and stuff." And then next night that we had actually the sirens, so I woke up, it was like 2:45 at night I woke up and I couldn't comprehend what's happening because it's just different sound then you realize you wake up and you realize what it is. And then I started to think, what should I do? Okay. They told me to go inside the apartment. So I went there and I'm sitting there, okay, let me take my phone with me. So I took my phone with me and, after five minutes, it stopped. The siren stops, and then you could hear the rocket on top of you. And it sounds like, fast airplane. And then you could hear different directions so you can feel the direction, the changing direction, which is different than, like, hurricane because, you know, from what side to expect it. And there's like three when one direction and if you want different direction and, and then you could hear clicking of voice when they lowered the arms and they take down the drones and all that stuff. So for two hours that I was sitting there, actually, I have to look it up. I probably recorded the sound of it. Let me look it up because it was scary. And that would be interesting for you to hear. And then I visited Kiev. We entered Kiev on the bus. It was like 5:30 in the morning. And you can see soldiers on the bridges taking down, so you can see all the weapons and stuff and here's bus coming, and they're shooting the drones right here. It was new for me, but they accustomed to it, so they just know what to do and what to watch for. So they know by sound if that is a rocket or that is a drone or that's something different. And they can tell you the difference, and that is scary actually. Kids are crying, because everybody reacts differently and because of the sound they're crying. I came back from Kiev. I spent two months in Ukraine. So I came back on Monday, and on Wednesday two houses down from my apartment, the bomb got into the apartment building and the whole family died. Three mom, three teenage daughters. The dad went to get water and that's how he survived. So, everybody was calling me if I left Ukraine already. And if my apartment is okay and stuff like that. Yeah. It is very difficult.

00;24;41 - 00;24;49

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And in what other ways has the war impacted you, even though you live here, and you visited during that time?



00;24;49 - 00;26;24

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** My parents used to live in Ukraine, and they didn't want to come here permanently. But then when the war started, we had three families from Kiev living in our apartment, with kids and grandkids. The grandkid was, she was born, in April of '22. They had to move because she was so very pregnant at that time. So my parents lived in the summer home, and then my brother wanted to see them. So he planned a trip to Ukraine. And then, when the war started, he did not go. So my parents, they traveled, somebody dropped him off near the border, and then they had to cross the border on foot. And my dad is 85 right now, and my mom was like, 75 or so. And they went to Slovakia, and they actually told me how they had refugees camps. It was tense and stuff near the border in Slovakia. My dad ended up in the emergency because of his high blood pressure, and they didn't take a penny. And they said that they feel for the people. And the time came that they supposed to go back and my brother said, "You know what? How about you go here?" And they said, okay. So he called me, "what do we feel if I will bring them over?" And I'm like, okay, come on. So the morning, I'm waking up morning and I have my text message from him. We are on the plane. So that was really fast.

00;26;24 - 00;26;27

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** What do you hope to see in Ukraine's future?

00;26;28 - 00;26;34

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I want to see Ukraine, how it was five years ago.

00;26;34 - 00;26;43

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Talk to me about your experiences, your broader experiences, as a Ukrainian woman living in Central Florida.

00;26;43 - 00;27;26

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Well, it's fun for Ukrainians women here especially. I love the weather, even it's hot. But, from women's perspective, especially when you have kids, you understand that you don't have to have a winter clothes for the whole family or fall clothes for the whole family. So you basically have shorts, dresses and light pants. If you live near the ocean, when kids were younger, we would go to the ocean a lot. Right now, they have their own things, so not that much. I really enjoy the weather right now. It took me two years to acclimate after Chicago. I was sweating so, so much. But right now, I mean, you are used to it.

00;27;26 - 00;27;35

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And from your perspective, how has Orlando changed since 2008, since you've been here, if it's changed?

00;27;35 - 00;28;02

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I don't know. I don't know how it changed. A lot of people came to Florida from, let's say, New York and Chicago over COVID time. So, I see the growth of population, a lot of traffic on the roads, we enjoyed that wasn't so much traffic compared to Chicago. But actually, when I went to Chicago a few years ago, there was less traffic than in Florida because a lot of people are working from home.

00;28;02 - 00;28;09

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And from your perspective, what challenges does Orlando face today?

00;28;09 - 00;28;10

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** What do you mean?

00;28;10 - 00;28;12

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** In whatever aspect, it could be...

00;28;12 - 00;28;18

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I think maybe overpopulation? That's what I think. That's what I think.

00;28;18 - 00;28;22

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** In what ways do you think Orlando will change in the next 25 years?

00;28;22 - 00;28;23

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** How?

00;28;23 - 00;28;24

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** How. Yeah.

00;28;24 - 00;29;51

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** You know what, I don't know. I'm afraid to anticipate because I'm looking at the progress that we did as a computer programmer, I used to do punch cards. Right. And then you huge TVs, and then we had computers that were taking the whole room. And then I came here, and my friend—I work at the custom office, so we had two servers, and the server was a 48 megabyte storage for the 5 regions to store the information about import and export. And, I came here. They were looking to buy a computer for the house, and I'm like, why didn't you computer in the house? And she was like, oh, we will do some paperwork and stuff like that. And I was looking at the parameters, what they were looking at for the computer. And it was like three times, four times bigger than I had server for the company. And look at right now we have phones and then we have the virtual reality. And people were traveling in the 60s, not by airplane, but the boat and then we are flying using taxi. Sometimes taxi from Chicago to the places I go is more expensive to take it from Orlando to Chicago on the plane, like 60, 70 bucks. So, I don't want to anticipate what could happen. I'm kind of scared how far it will progress.

00;29;51 - 00;30;15

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** That's a great answer, considering your experience with technology. That's a great answer. But you mentioned technology. That reminds me, part of your involvement with the Ukrainian project incorporation is to use some of those skills from your career, correct? Can you just talk to me a little bit about that.

00;30;15 - 00;31;20

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Yes. Our lifetime experience helped us to pick the direction of who we can do what in the Ukrainian Project. So if I know technology more, then it is easier for me to say, okay, let's do websites and stuff. Vasyl has more clients based on his business, so he knows how to get sponsors. I know people in Chicago, so we can speak about sponsorship and stuff. Nikola, on the other hand, has a lot of Facebook groups that's what he likes to do, so he can advertise in there. My dad was a cameraman in the TV station, so I know a lot of artists and performers from back then. Yeah. So all that together. And we are looking for people who can contribute because we don't know everything, and we need a lot of help so we are trying to involve people who can contribute. And who wants to do that?

00;31;21 - 00;31;32

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And what ways has your Ukrainian heritage influence your perspective on life generally, but also living here in Orlando or United States specifically?

00;31;32 - 00;33;36

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** You know what? United States, I will say United States. We experienced Illinois as a Democratic state compared to Florida as a Republican state. It was difficult for me to comprehend that the United States is more like group of countries, not compared to the Soviet Union that was basically one country with just regions, because we had all the rules the same for every republic. And here you have completely different rules, like insurances different, driver's licenses are different. So it took me a while to accustom because I thought that's everything is supposed to be the other way. But because we have experience with two different societies, kind of, we can, like, I'm teaching my kids what to watch for based on the experience in the Soviet Union. Because I find a lot of similarities between, let's say, Democratic states and Soviet Union and whatever is broadcasted as a brain brainwashing thing, and the way it works, it's just, based on our experience, not just words. Great book. I don't know if you read it. I was shocked. I really highly recommend to read it. That was eye opening, because whatever we had in the Soviet Union that was in that book. But it would take us tens of years to understand the consequences. And there is consequences in the book right there, right there. So I highly recommend all young people to read the book. It's big. Ayn Rand wrote it. She's a philosopher, you know, she was from Saint Petersburg, Russia. So there's basically, I'm watching right now and I'm telling my kids to watch for that stuff. And think about the consequences that could trigger one idea or the other idea.

00;33;36 - 00;33;46

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** And lastly, if someone is listening to this recording 50 or 100 years from now, what would you want them to know about your culture and the state of Florida or the United States?

00;33;46 - 00;34;14

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** I love Florida. Culture, probably somebody would be listening and have the same visions as we do right now. We want our kids to be happy. We want our kids to be safe. We want our community to be safe. We want to have friends around. We want to be able to come together and learn different language. So we want to experience a different language together so we can share our stories.

00;34;14 - 00;34;21

**SEBASTIAN GARCIA:** Absolutely. Thank you so much for sharing a little bit of your time with me on this busy day here at the festival. I really appreciate it.

00;34;21 - 00;34;25

**ROKSALANA CISYK:** Thank you so much. Thank you for coming here and spending your day here.