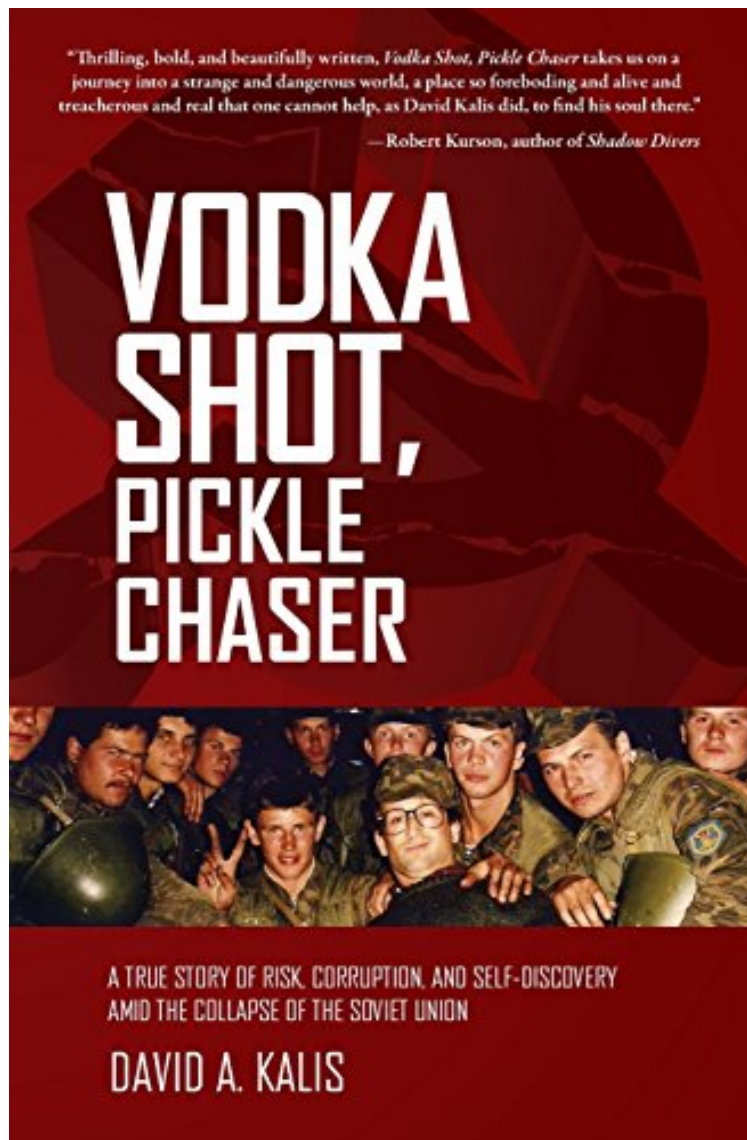


(Download) *Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser*: A true story of risk, corruption and self-discovery amid the collapse of the Soviet Union

Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser: A true story of risk, corruption and self-discovery amid the collapse of the Soviet Union

David A. Kalis

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#265161 in Books Kalis David A 2014-03-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .58 x 5.251, .72 #File Name: 0991230205256 pages *Vodka Shot Pickle Chaser A True Story of Risk Corruption and Self Discovery Amid the Collapse of the Soviet Union* | File size: 78.Mb

David A. Kalis : *Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser*: A true story of risk, corruption and self-discovery amid the collapse of the Soviet Union before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser: A true story of risk, corruption and self-discovery amid the collapse of the Soviet*

Union:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An engaging tale that resonates on a number of levels. By Dean M. Whitney I'd recommend this book because it is a wonderful read for a number of reasons. First, it must be said that Kalis has a great story to tell and this first-time author tells it with the honesty and directness that only a first time author can. I get the sense that he was smiling as he was recounting his post-college years in Russia, and as I was reading, I found I was smiling along with him. This makes it an enjoyable read from beginning to end. Next, the book connects on a number of levels (that other reviewers have touched upon, so I will not go into details here). It is a great coming-of-age tale about finding yourself after college. It is also a story about chasing your cultural heritage. And it does provide a great snapshot of the Russian mindset during a time of considerable political upheaval, and one that has become more relevant today given the crisis in Ukraine. But mostly I feel that it's a story about being in the moment and relishing those moments. Kalis seems to have Zelig-est luck to be in the right place at the right time—as Russian tanks are coming down the street or when Mafia thugs have it out in a bar. But in reality it was Kalis and his curiosity and courage (some say hutzpah) that got him there. He could have turned away, stayed in the background or went home, but he leaned-in, absorbed these moments, and he benefited from it. It serves as a reminder to all of us to take advantage of these opportunities – to engage in experiences in real-time – and see how they unfold. It is a tacit takeaway from the book, and one that I hope I can bring to the forefront for my children. It is also an important element, along with all the others, that should make this book required reading for junior high and high school students.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Engrossing, can't-put-it-down, extremely well-written: get this book! By Alan Safran This book is wonderful--it is so engaging. I took it with me on a vacation and finished it too quickly! The story is dramatic, exciting, and the writing is so clear and interesting that you will feel like you, too, were in the USSR in 1991. This book will appeal to young people graduating from college who wonder what they will do next; to people who've had adventures in their lives and want to relive them through David Kalis' story; to people interested in Soviet history; to people interested in gaining insights into current Russian/Ukrainian issues; to people who love non-fiction that is important, intriguing, and compelling; to people looking to reconnect with their own pasts, like David.

Davis Kalis is a top-notch writer and teller of a terrific personal story. Get this book!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Vodka Shot*: Interesting first-hand account of fascinating times By Tim Lundergan This is an interesting and entertaining account of the author's experiences in Russia just after the collapse of the Soviet Union. What started as a one-month visit turned into a couple of years living and working in a country that was disintegrating and reinventing itself, not always successfully. Looking back years later, the author describes the often humorous, sometimes very serious, adventures in which he overcame all manner of business, linguistic, cultural, and other challenges. The curiosity that led him to explore well beyond the usual tourist paths even landed him on the wrong side of army tanks during a coup. Along the way, he encountered everyone from Gorbachev to Russian mobsters, along with lots of ordinary Russians. This is a tale of self-discovery and not an academic tome. But in describing those people, the author brings to life experiences and attitudes that have shaped today's Russia and its attitudes toward the West. When I finished reading *Vodka Shot*, I just wished the author had produced another round of his entertaining experiences.

For David, graduating from college was a matter of course, but figuring out what to do next with his life turns into a paralyzing decision. On a whim, he decides to travel to the Soviet Union. His loose plans call for a thirty-day tour of Leningrad, but after finding himself caught up in the middle of a coup d'état that destabilizes the country, he ends up staying abroad for two and a half tumultuous years. From surviving perilous run-ins with the Russian mafia and the Soviet military, to searching for his lost heritage in a remote village, David's story is a riveting coming-of-age memoir. He finds that the road less traveled can lead to unexpected adventure, and that looking backward sometimes provides the best insight into how to move forward. Visit www.davidakalis.com for pictures, video, and more information.

A "real-life thriller" - The Boston Globe "Thrilling, bold, and beautifully written, *Vodka Shot*, *Pickle Chaser* takes us on a journey into a strange and dangerous world, a place so foreboding and alive and treacherous and real that one cannot help, as David Kalis did, to find his soul there." -Robert Kurson, author of *Shadow Divers* "David Kalis' wonderfully compelling memoir, *Vodka Shot*, *Pickle Chaser*, has all the attributes of storytelling at its best: masterful suspense and an engaging, voice-driven narrative that pulls us into the heart of an exotic adventure." - Laurie Baker, author "An affecting coming-of-age memoir looking at life in the Soviet Union at a time of political and social change by American debut author Kalis. Recent college graduate David found himself at loose ends. He knew he wanted to use his degree in Soviet East European Studies but wasn't sure how. He embarked on a 30-day trip to the Soviet Union, hoping to improve his language skills, and ended up staying two and a half years, only returning to the United States when he had completed a voyage of self-discovery. On his very first day in Moscow in 1991, he found himself on a Soviet tank photographing a political uprising; two years later, he repeated the experience at a demonstration at the

Bely Dom, the Russian White House. However, the second time, after being shot at, he underwent a watershed moment, realizing that it was time to leave the city he had made his home. Although small in stature, Kalis is big in chutzpah: He talked his way into a job, met his hero Gorbachev, and stood up to the Russian Mafia (vodka helped). Kalis' forthrightness allows readers to see the flaws in his younger self, most of them attributable to the foibles of youth. However, despite his immaturity, he possesses a moral code, which prevented him from taking advantage of the prevalence of prostitution and pornography, preferring instead to meet partners the old-fashioned way. When Kalis finally visited the village of his grandfather's birth, in Ukraine, he achieved a deeper understanding of his heritage and the losses his Jewish grandparents experienced during the Holocaust and pogroms. The scenes in Ukraine, in which he feels a deep connection with the people and his own faith, are particularly poignant in the context of recent events in the region. While Kalis doesn't provide much historical background, his first-person account of life in the Soviet Union at the tail end of the Cold War provides depth that history texts cannot. Well-written and absorbing, his memoir will appeal to general readers as well as those with an interest in Eastern Europe. A personal look at the disintegration of the Soviet Union, experienced through the eyes of an occasionally callow, but always likable, young man." - Kirkus

"David Kalis has written an absorbing coming of age story with an unusual backdrop: Russia at the end of the Soviet Union. His many experiences, from comedic to terrifying and everything in between, make for great reading. Get this book!" - Rabbi Keith Stern

From the Back Cover? FOR DAVID, graduating from college was a matter of course, but figuring out what to do next with his life turns into a paralyzing decision. Always pressured to be a high-achiever, he can do anything--but from corporate conformity to graduate school confinement, no choice feels right. On a whim, he decides to travel to the Soviet Union. His loose plans call for a thirty-day tour of Leningrad, but after finding himself caught up in the middle of a coup d'état that destabilizes the country, he ends up staying abroad for two and a half tumultuous years. From surviving perilous run-ins with the Russian mafia and the Soviet military, to searching for his lost heritage in a remote village, David's story is a riveting coming-of-age memoir. He finds that the road less traveled can lead to unexpected adventure, and that looking backward sometimes provides the best insight into how to move forward.

About the Author David Kalis grew up in the Boston suburbs. He earned his B.A. in Soviet, East European Studies from Tufts University and an M.B.A. from The University of Chicago, Graduate School of Business. *Vodka Shot, Pickle Chaser* is the culmination of combing through his experiences, organizing his thoughts, and presenting his journey and the life lessons he learned along the way. He currently is a marketing professional, a loving husband and father, and an Alderman for the City of Newton, MA.