A PRACTICAL VIEW ON THE AMERICAN LIVING - AN AFFAIR
(by Miklos Vamos - Yale School of Drama)

I have been Hungarian for 38 years. I'll try something else for the next 38. I'll try to be an American, for instance, North American, I mean. As an American, I'll speak English fluently. I'll make American mistakes instead of Hungarian mistakes and I'll call them slang.

As an American, I'll have a credit card. Or two. I'll use and misuse them and have to pay the fees. I'll apply for other cards right away. Golden Visa. Golden American. Golden Gate. And I'll buy a car, a great American car. Then I'll sell my car and buy a smaller West German car because it's reliable and doesn't use so much gasoline. Later, I'll sell it and buy a smaller Japanese car with a computer aboard. Then I'll sell it and buy a camper. When I sell the camper I'll buy a bicycle.

As an American, I'll buy a dog. And a cat. And a goat. And a white whale. And also some big stones as pets.

I'll live in my own house. It will be mine, except for the 99 percent mortgage. I'll sell my house and buy a condo. I'll sell my condo and buy a mobile home. I'll sell my mobile home and buy an igloo. I'll sell my igloo and buy a tent. As an American, I'll be clever: I'll sell my igloo and buy a tent when I move to Florida from Alaska.

Anyway, I'll move a lot. And I'll buy the best dishwasher, microwave, dryer and hi-fi in the world - that is, the USA. I'll have warranty for all or my money back. I'll use automatic toothbrushes, egg boilers and garage doors. I'll call every single number starting 1-800.

I'll buy the fastest food I can get and I'll eat it very slowly because I'll watch TV during the meals. Of course, I'll buy a VCR. I'll watch the taped programs and then retape. Sometimes, I'll retape first.

As an American, I'll have an answering machine too. The outgoing message will promise that I'll call you back as soon as possible, but it won't be possible soon.

If I answer the phone as an exception, I'll tell you that I can't talk now because I have a long-distance call on the other line but I'll call you back as soon as possible ( see above ).

And I'll get a job. I'll always be looking for a better job, but I won't get the job I want. I'll work really hard since as an American I wanna be rich. I'll always be in a hurry: Time is Money. Unfortunately, my time won't be worth as much money as my bosses' time. Sometimes, I'll have some time and I still won't have enough money. Then I'll start to hate the wisdom of this saying.
As an American, sometimes I'll be badly depressed. I'll be the patient of 12 psychiatrists, and I'll be disappointed with all of them. I'll try to change my life a little bit. I'll try to exchange my wives, my cars, my lovers, my houses, my children, my jobs and my pets.

Sometimes, I'll exchange a few dollars into other currencies and I'll travel to Europe, Hawaii, Tunisia, Martinique and Japan. I'll be happy to see that people all over the world are jealous of us Americans.

I'll take at least 2000 snapshots on each trip. I'll also buy a video camera and shoot everywhere. I'll look at the tapes, photos and slides, and I'll try to remember my experiences when I have time and am in the mood. But I won't have time or be in the mood because I'll get depressed again and again.

I'll smoke cigarettes. Then I'll be afraid of cancer and I'll stop. I'll smoke cigars. And opium. I'll take a breather and then try LSD and heroin and cocaine and marijuana. To top it all off: crack. I'll try to stop but I won't be able.

I'll call 1-800-222-HELP. If nothing helps, I'll have some gay experiences. And swing. And if I am still unhappy, I'll make the final effort: I'll try to read a book. I'll buy some best sellers. I'll prefer James A. Michener. My second favorite will be the "How to Be Rich in Seven Weeks". I'll try to follow this advice in seven years.

I'll always be concerned about my health as an American. I won't eat anything but health food until I get ill. From time to time, I'll read in the paper that I should stop eating meat, sugar, bread, fiber, grains, iron, toothpaste, and that I should stop drinking milk, soda, water, acid rain. I'll try to follow this advice, but then I'll read in the paper that I should do it the other way around.

I'll be puzzled. "Hey, I don't even know what cholesterol is !". Yet, I'll stick to decaf coffee, sugar-free cookies, salt-free butter and lead-free gasoline. I'll believe that proper diet and exercise make life longer. I'll go jogging everyday until I am mugged twice and knocked down three times. Then I'll just exercise in my room but it will also increase my appetite. I'll go on several diets, and little by little I'll reach 200 pounds.

As an American, I'll buy a new TV every time a larger screen appears on the market. In the end, the screen will be larger than room. It will be difficult to put this enormous TV into my living room; thus, I'll put my living room into the TV. Anyway, my living room will look very much like the living rooms you can see on the screen. My life won't differ from the lives you can see on the soaps: nobody will complain. I won't complain either. I'll always smile.

After all, we are Americans, aren't we ?